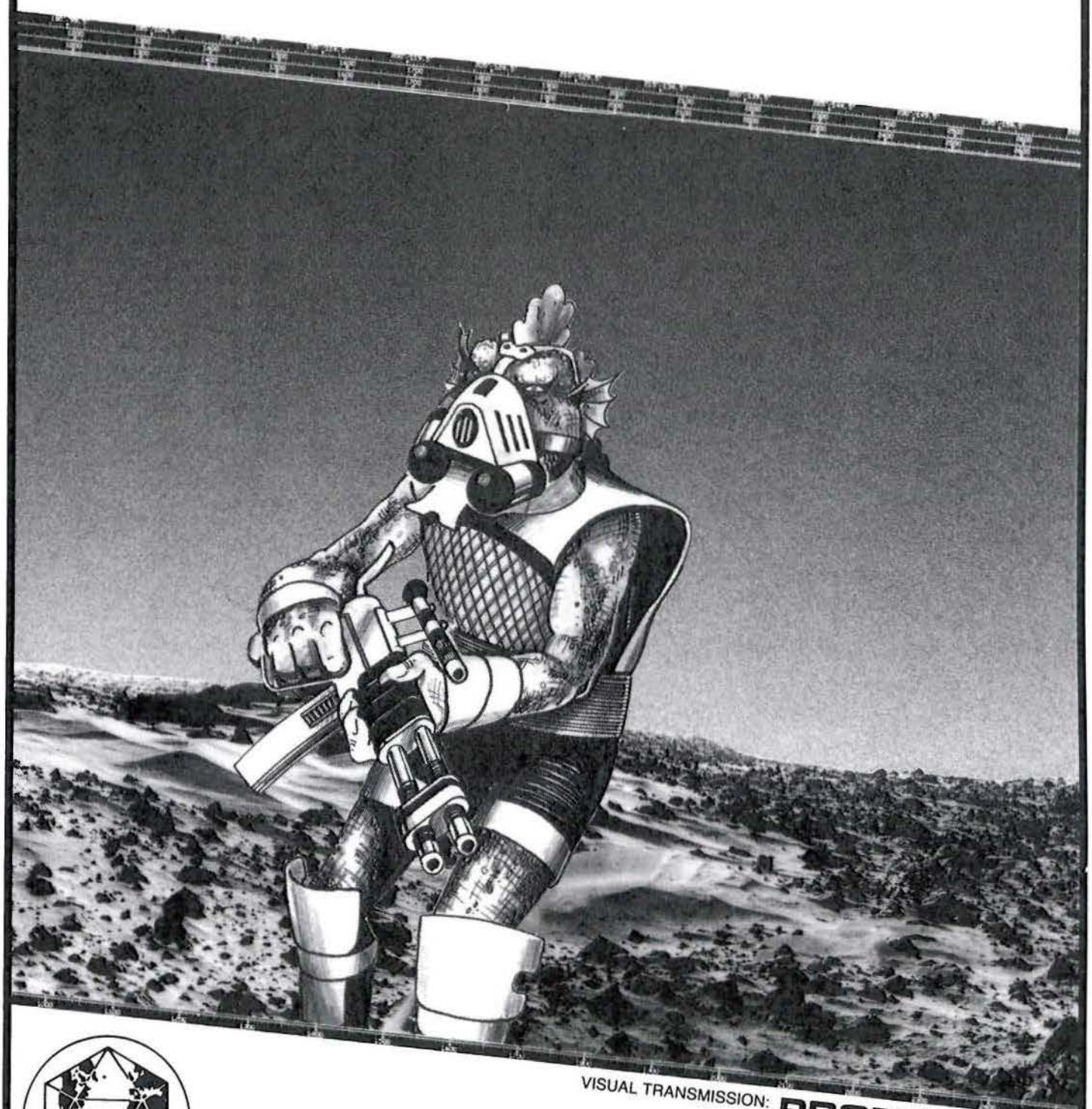
POLYHEDRON™

Newzine Issue 26



VISUAL TRANSMISSION: **PROBE TYR II**

RPGA™ NETWORK

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NEWSZINE

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Notes From HQ

News for October

If this is your first issue of POLYHEDRON™ Newszine, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the RPGA™ Network. The newszine is your means of communication with over 9,000 other gamers worldwide. In it, we publish articles donated by members, club news, official rulings on game-related questions, and tournament modules. If you have an idea that you would like to share with the rest of the Network, write it up and send it to HQ. This is your chance to speak out!

GEN CON® 18 Game Fair

I'm pleased to report that we're a team again. HQ and the convention staff have problems every year, but this time understaffing, frequent equipment failures, and a new convention site made matters worse than usual. We were unpardonably late mailing judge assignments and tournament packets, and preregistration was behind as well. A number of Network judge volunteers didn't feel they could handle the job on short notice, and cancelled shortly before the convention, which put still more pressure on those who were willing to pitch in and do their share. It really looked as though we would have major problems on our hands, but so many members were willing to go that extra mile that almost no one noticed that there had been problems. The vast majority of the judges who had volunteered showed up on schedule, studied their modules quickly, and made sure that their players had the time of their lives. Most judges took on extra sessions without complaint, and not only did we have enough judges to cover the scheduled sessions, we also were able to take on all the additional members who wanted to play! Never before have so many members had so many events to choose from at a single convention. It just goes to show what I've suspected all along: it takes all of us working together as a club to make the magic happen. Thanks to all those who made it possible.

Unfortunately, some of the tournament paperwork was accidently removed from Convention HQ by cleaning crews. We have been able to trace most participants through the advancement lists and the convention's records of preregistration ticket sales. If you did NOT acquire your ticket for any RPGA Network event through regular preregistration, please contact HQ immediately to make sure that your experience points are accurately recorded.

Holding an RPGA Network Tournament

As most of you know, any registered RPGA Network club may request a sanctioned tournament. The procedure has been rather informal to date, and we have tried to fulfill even the last-minute requests so that members would have as many opportunities to participate as possible. That was fine when there were only a few requests to deal with, but now there are so many that we have to ask a few things of you.

1. Make your request in writing at least six months prior to the proposed date of your tournament. We need this much time to reserve a scenario, arrange for advertising in POLYHEDRON™ Newszine and DRAGON® Magazine Convention Calendar, and obtain special prizes for your event.

2. Do not advertise a sanctioned event or use any trademarks owned by TSR, Inc., (or any other game company) until you have received written permission to do so and instructions on the proper use of the trademarks. Companies must defend their trademarks vigorously from ANY misuse, or risk losing them. Also, although it is rare, certain unscrupulous conventions have attempted to force the Network into sponsoring tournaments by advertising without permission, knowing that our reputation will suffer if we refuse. For that reason, all requests from anyone who advertises a sanctioned event or uses trademarks without permission will be refused, and the convention will be listed as non-sanctioned in the Newszine.

3. If you wish to use a scenario of your own rather than one provided by HQ, put that request in your initial letter, giving as many details as possible. If permission is granted, the finished scenario MUST be in our hands for review and editing six months prior to the tournament date, minimum, or HQ will substitute another event, or decline sanctioning if none are available. We reserve the right to alter submissions or refuse to sanction them altogether at our own discretion. (After all, it is OUR name that will receive the credit or blame for the final version.) No copies may be distributed until HQ has returned a final version with written authorization. Authors will not have to give up publication rights to the material unless publication by another company would infringe TSR's copyrights. In exchange for the editorial and development time we provide, they must agree to allow HQ to make the scenario available to other registered clubs for tournament use for a period of one year.

Plan your tournaments far enough in advance that you will be able to adhere to these regulations. You can still make a late request, and if we happen to have something available, fine; but we make no guarantees.

Delays, Delays

Numerous production difficulties have delayed both the membership directory and this issue of the Newszine. The directory is finally in production, and it should be in your hands before the end of the year; the Newszine should be back on schedule as of the next issue. We apologize for the delays on both of these items, and thank you for your patience.

For those of you who paid for a full year of membership, but received cards which expire too early, we will be extending your memberships to cover that error. You should receive notification of the extension within the next few months.

The City Project

Last issue I proposed that we in the RPGA Network combine our efforts and create a fantasy city. The response to that idea has been overwhelming, so we're going to go ahead with the project. (For those of you who have recently joined us, the proposal is that each member wishing to contribute to the project may send in as much or as little as desired, including taverns, shops, colorful NPCs, townhouses, street encounters, and so forth. All submissions will be combined and rewritten for consistency by HQ, and the final version will then be published. Each contributor will be initially credited in print and will receive a free copy from the first printing. In that way, we will have a fantasy city that we can all use, and we will all have contributed a little something to it.)

So far, the consensus is that the city should be placed on a seacoast (or major river) in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy World Setting. Of those interested in a Greyhawk setting, most favor the Wild Coast area. HQ will be finalizing details with Gary Gygax on that subject in the near future.

Please hold your actual submissions until specific procedures are published next issue. Use the extra time to make sure that your submissions are legible, that any maps are properly keyed, and that your submission does not include material in poor taste, such as graphic violence, foul language, or extremely suggestive material. Include as much detail as you possibly can. (It is far easier for us to remove or alter excessive detail than to make something up to fill in the gaps.) If you are submitting NPCs, include personality notes for role-playing.

'Til next issue,
Penny Petticord

Squeaky Wheels

by Frank Mentzer

Truth can be pretty hard to find these days. It's often quietly hiding in shadows, while the flickering Torch of Opinion makes its own spotlight.

It's easy to miss. If you voice your opinions loud enough and often enough, some people start to believe them, whether or not they're true. The squeaky wheel gets the grease, so the loud and controversial gets heard — and believed — far more often than the quiet and normal.

And that's the ONLY reason for the current debate about the effects of role-playing games. (In case you've been asleep for a few months, some people would have you believe that the ideas in games can be bad for you, and specifically, they say that the D&D® game causes suicide.) How can I say it's the ONLY reason? It's a matter of simple numbers.

Raw Facts

In the USA, over 10 million people have tried fantasy role-playing games, with the D&D and AD&D® games accounting for most of that total. According to consumer surveys, over half of them still play regularly.

The number of suicides in America each year is more than one-tenth of one percent of the total population — and that's an absolute minimum; you can find many experts to say it's triple that or even higher. That's a grim and tragic situation, and the problem is being addressed by various authorities. But based on that terrible national percentage, more than 5,000 of those suicides should have been players of the D&D game. So where are they?

Some people have been working very hard to track down each such death, and they've come up with a couple of dozen cases in which the victims were players of D&D games. (They haven't found that it was a cause, mind you, though that's their opinion. If you stick to the facts, they've only found that the game appears in the victims' backgrounds.) They've also found that most of the victims watched TV and movies, most victims used firearms, and most took some form of medicine within the year before the tragic end. But those familiar items don't make headlines.

These folks broadcasting their misleading opinions on *60 Minutes*, the *Today* show, and elsewhere have found less than 50 suicide cases in which the D&D game appeared in the victim's background. Fifty instead of 5,000? That's about 1% of what could be expected from the national rate. It seems that not only are these attackers' opinions easily disproved, but that role-playing games help PREVENT suicide, not cause it! You could make a strong case for this. The suicide rate for gamers is far, far below the national average.

And that's logical, say many experts. According to various studies of the problem, almost every suicide victim first became withdrawn and solitary. D&D games, on the other hand, are group activities, and they encourage just the opposite sort of behavior.

Again according to the experts, suicide victims are often too rigid to adapt to new problems or situations. But role-playing games present changing situations all the time; your character must adapt, or he won't survive the next dragon attack.

Please don't just take my word for this information. The figures are just simple arithmetic, and you can dig up the actual numbers for yourself. But it adds up to the same thing.

I'm not trying to prove that role-playing games actually do prevent problems; we just don't have enough data. But by the numbers, it's obvious that these vocal critics simply don't have the facts.

Radecki

One key source of all this noise is Thomas Radecki of Illinois. He founded the National Coalition on Television Violence (NCTV). He claims to be "a psychiatrist at the University of Illinois School of Medicine." According to a national news service, he's in private practice in Decatur, and has a non-salaried appointment at the University.

In the past, Mr. Radecki has tried to convince us that the Christian Broadcast Network, tickling, and Donald Duck are all hazardous to our mental health. The experts on violence and mental health say "BULL!" but then, they don't go on a TV show to say it. He does.

Mr. Radecki himself revealed why he's doing all this. After he saw a violent movie, he had a fantasy about kicking and beating a nurse. (No, I'm not making that up; he was quoted in an Urbana newspaper.) So now he's a radical anti-violence crusader.

Mr. Radecki is perfectly free to broadcast his opinions. That's the American way. But it's up to you, gentle reader, to decide which opinions to believe. We encourage you to get the facts yourself, and do your own thinking. Or, if you wish, you can just believe the Opinions from this guy in Illinois.

If you get the facts, we hope you'll pass them on to others. It's time to clear the air.

Religious Objectors

This article does not address the fact that elements of fantasy games may contradict people's beliefs. If our games (or any other printed materials) offend you, you can always stop reading. Those who object on religious grounds have the same freedom of speech as everyone else does, so they can try to get you to stop playing and believe what they do. You have a similar right to join them, ignore them, or tell them to stop bothering you. But DON'T try to argue with them; religious beliefs are very deep-rooted (I know mine are!) and usually cannot be changed by casual conversation or "logical" debate. Theology and game play don't mix.

Some folks claimed for a while that D&D games promoted satan worship. We've never worried much about that charge because it's silly and easily disproved. All you have to do is read the game. But if you run across these folks who are behind the times, who still think that you need black robes and candles to play the game — well, perhaps you should just ignore them. They'll either wise up or go away. (Or you might explain the game to them, but be careful. Though you may not believe in real magic and witches, these folks do; that's why they're so upset.)

Ride it Out!

We think that all this noise will die down if the cold light of reason and Truth shines upon it. In the meantime, here are some things YOU can do to help clear the air.

These suggestions are for those who are under 18 years of age and living with their parents. In the following, substitute "friend" for "parent" if that's more appropriate.

1. **If your parents don't know you play, tell them.**

   One major source of the misunderstanding is a simple lack of communica-

tion. The game should be a source of simple fun, not something to keep secret. It might be fun to pretend it's secret stuff, but these days that can cause more misunderstandings.

2. **Keep your parents informed about when and where you play.**
   Parents don't usually want lots of details about your free-time activities, but they would appreciate knowing when you'll be out of the house (and why), and when you'll be back. They may also want to know who you're with.

3. **Try to introduce your parents to the game.**
   Let them try a couple of your standard NPCs, with developed personalities, statistics, equipment, and so forth. You're not trying to show them the complexities of starting a character; you just want to show them the game. Skip the details and get on with it.

4. **Start or join a local chapter of GLADD.**
   This informal organization, "Game Lovers Advocating DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®" games, has sprung up in the last few months. It is not sponsored by TSR, Inc., and has no known dues or headquarters. GLADD members are simply those of you who want to defend your rights by countering the unfair, poorly informed, and sometimes slanderous attacks on the games you play.

Response

Whether you're a player, a DM, or even a non-participant, we at TSR, Inc., and RPGA™ Network HQ want to hear your views on this artificially created controversy. We'd also like to hear whether the suggestions given above have any good effect in your personal situation. So write!

You might also let others know your views — your local paper or school, or even a national TV show. (Check with parents, please, if you decide on the latter.) Many of you have sent press clippings to us, and thanks muchly. But please identify the date and the publication.

Hang in there. And remember: when your character saves vs. mind attacks, you add Wisdom bonuses. So show a little wisdom out there!

GEN CON 18 GAME CONVENTION AUG. 22 - 25, 1985

CON-FUSION

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by Fast Eddie Carmien

It's only been a week since the final Sunday of GEN CON 18 Game Fair, yet the motion picture vividness remains with me. For instance, who was that puck-looking westerner I met on Wednesday — so West Coast, so Pacific Northwest that before he could speak, I yelled "You smell of Seattle! Who are you?" (*Puck-looking?! — M. Selinker*)

And who was the svelte, caped vision who wafted into the RPGA™ Network Convention HQ to count votes? Dressed in black tunic, sheer hose, and a leather headband, she was stunning. All I could do was stare as she ghosted in to take a place at the counting table. She was a bad influence on my sanity; I had to step outside for a moment to catch my breath.

Other folks too numerous to mention also made the convention a visual extravaganza, but there was something else stirring the ether at the con site, something to do with vibrations — yes, vibrations.

Rampant volunteerism and impressive attendance at the various RPGA Network events were symptoms of an improved state of mind for our little club. There was something in the air this time that made the con a special good time for all of us. What was it? Well, words are often inadequate when used to describe such phenomena, but I'll do my best. Frank Mentzer mentioned offhand something about electricity, and certainly that was present; but it was the electricity of a group of folks proud to be together and having a good time. It was the kind of energy that pulls you forward if you're reluctant, and gives you an extra push if you're already active. It was, and still is, the kind of thing you say "gee whiz" about when you recall what it was like to "be there."

What are the ingredients? How can we achieve the proper mix again? Such energy is created, not manufactured. Perhaps, in the end, we'll have to note that a good state of mind was the most identifiable factor of the Great Thing just past, and hope to create for ourselves a similar synergy wherever we gather.

A Quick Note of Thanks

On behalf of the RPGA Network, I'd like to thank Kelley Foote, Jeff Grubb, Gary Gygax, Tracy Hickman, Frank Mentzer, Steve Null, Merle Rasmussen, Mike Selinker, and Jim Ward for writing our tournament scenarios, and Doug Behringer, Jeff Grubb, Steve Null, Alex Potente, and Verne Wetherholt for coordinating them. And special thanks go to the convention organizers: Martha Hayes, Heidi Gygax Raupp, Diane Cocroft, N. Cahoon, and their on-site staff, for efforts above and beyond the call of duty, and for making GEN CON 18 Game Fair one of the finest ever.

I'd also like to thank those who helped the folks at RPGA Network HQ during GEN CON 18 Game Fair: Jeff Brandimore, Ollie Cahoon, Bryan Conry, Sherry A. Dees, Frank Fleming, Mike Gawlik, Justin Hoffman, Dan Kramarsky, Mike Lach, Joe Laidlaw, Dewa Mann, Stan Mitchell, Steve Null, Rembert Parker, Alex Potente, Sonny Scott, Mike Selinker, Mike Somers, Kay Steele, Jay Tummelson, John Vaccaro, Mike Werner, Lew Wright, and Skip Williams, plus a few more who were too quick to be caught or recognized during the con-fusion.

Those named above, and others unnamed, came in droves to help out with tournament scoring, player sorting, and character pack collating, to name a few of the bigger tasks that always need to be done to make a Network event glow in the dusk. They flocked into the broom closet we hastily knocked together and called the RPGA Network's Convention HQ, unstoppable, eager, armed for bear with good cheer and positive energy, grabbing and nabbing every task there was at hand to be done. In California talk, the vibes were great. Gee whiz!

WHERE CHAOS REIGNS

This year's GEN CON® Game Fair was marked by increased involvement on the part of RPGA™ Network members. More members than ever before participated in Network events, and more than ever before volunteered to help run things before and during the convention itself. The following articles are the impressions of two of those volunteers who worked with HQ before and during the convention. Here's just a sample of what can go wrong with a major game convention. . . .

Convention Week

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by Sonny Scott

During the last few years, I've made it a point to go to RPGA™ Network HQ about a week before GEN CON® Game Fair to help out during the pre-con chaos. This year was about as organized as usual. Upon my arrival, Penny Petticord put me in a cubicle with three phones and a computer terminal, briefed me on what not to do or say, and turned me loose on unsuspecting callers so that she and the convention staff could get some work done.

The phones rang constantly from 7:00 AM till the staff went home at 10:00 PM Most of the calls during the final week concerned the best way to get to MECCA, whether it was too late to pre-register, and registrants who had not received their tickets (about 1,500 people). But a few were less than standard, and those I will share with those of you who have considered pre-convention volunteer work.

☎ **Sonny:** GEN CON Game Fair, may I help you?

Caller: Could I talk to someone about GEN CON 18 Game Fair?

Is there anything I can do for you?

Could I talk with the convention staff, please?

This is the convention staff. May I help you?

Could someone tell me if there is going to be a GEN CON Game Fair this year?

Yes, there will be a GEN CON Game Fair. It will be held at MECCA in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Where will it be this year?

At MECCA in Milwaukee.

Oh. Uh, could you register me?

No, I'm sorry. Pre-registration is closed, but you can register at the door.

Oh. Uh . . . thanks.

You're welcome. Thank you for calling GEN CON Game Fair.

☎ **Sonny:** RPGA Network, may I help you?

Caller: I'm running a game, and I was wondering if I should allow a magic-user to keep the *+5 holy sword* with a laser attachment that he got when he killed a kobold'? kobold(1)?

I wouldn't allow him to keep it.

OK, thanks.

☎ **Sonny:** GEN CON Game Fair, may I help you?

Caller: Yes, my name is Steve and I just got my tickets. I'm going to play in the RPGA™ Network AD&D® Game Open, so I don't think I'm going to be able to DM it for you.

Excuse me, sir, but according to my records, we sent you the module about two weeks ago.

Yeah, I know. It looks like it's going to be fun, too.

I'm sorry, but we aren't going to be able to allow you to play if you've seen the module.

When I got the module, I didn't know I was going to be able to get a ticket. I'll give it back. I haven't looked at it.

Sir, you just told me that it looked like it was going to be fun.

I didn't open it — my little sister did. Besides, I only looked at it while I was putting it back into the envelope.

I'm sorry, sir. We'll still need to disqualify you from playing. Since you already have the scenario, would you like to DM instead?

No, not really. This thing looks like it would be hard to run. Could I keep it and run it for my friends?

I'm sorry, sir. You'll have to return the module if you aren't going to judge at the convention.

OK. Can I make a copy?

We would prefer that you just return it without making a copy.

OK. I can't send it back yet because I don't have enough money to mail it.

Are you going to GEN CON 18 Game Fair?

Yes.

You could return it then.

Oh. OK.

☎ **Sonny:** RPGA Network.

Caller: Would it be OK if my magic-user gave the *holy sword* to my alchemist?

I wouldn't.

Oh . . . OK.

☎ **Sonny:** RPGA Network.

Caller: Yes. We live in New York, and we've just returned from Disneyland. Our son has received his notice that he has been selected to judge the D&D® Game Junior event at GEN CON Game Fair.

Yes?

Well, Junior is just way beyond the D&D game; he's into the AD&D game now. He's only eleven, but he's just much too smart to play the D&D game. Also, he said he'd prefer to be a DM instead of a judge.

Excuse me, but if he's judging the D&D game event, then he will be a DM.

Oh . . . just a minute, I don't think he knew that. (Pause.) He says he didn't pre-register. Could you get his tickets for all the events he wants?

I'm sorry, but most of the events listed in the pre-registration brochure are filled. We could get him some generic tickets that he could use to get into some other events at the convention.

No, I don't think so. We wouldn't want to go if he couldn't get EVERYTHING he wants. We don't want to see him disappointed.

I'm sorry to hear that he won't be able to DM for us.

Would he have to stand in line with the other people?

Yes. We have a separate line for DMs, but he would still need to stand in that line.

Oh, that wouldn't do. Could I stand in line for him?

Sure, if you wanted to.

Have you had many people cancel because they couldn't get into the events they wanted?

Well, we started out with 20 judges for the Junior event, and now we're down to one who hasn't called in yet.

Why have you lost so many?

It's hard to count on children who may not even have checked with their parents to see if they could go to the convention. That's why the convention rarely accepts scheduled events from judges under 16.

Oh. Well, Junior didn't check with us either, but it would be OK if that's what he wants to do. If he can't get all the events he wants though, then I don't think we'll bring him this year. We just don't think he'd be happy. I think we'll take him to Paris instead.

Thank you for calling.

☎ **Sonny:** RPGA Network, may I help you?

Caller: If my magic-user gave the *holy sword* to my ninja, could the ninja use it?

I wouldn't think so.

What weapons should I let my ninja use?

If you're the DM, I guess you could let him use whatever you please.

What weapons does your ninja use?

I don't play PC ninjas. If someone were playing one and it was causing an unbalance, then I'd take it out of the game.

Well, they are problems. Maybe I'll just kill them off. Thanks.

☎ **Sonny:** GEN CON Game Fair.

Caller: Could I get my judge payment for the event I'm running at GEN CON Game Fair before I come up?

I'm sorry, but we have no idea how many people will play in your event. Anyway, it's 11:30 PM and GEN CON Game Fair is tomorrow. There's no way we could get a check cut and mailed to you before tomorrow morning.

Well, I thought maybe you could wire me the money. I can't make it to the con if I don't have the money, because I need it for gas.

I really don't see how we can help you. Why didn't you notify us sooner?

I just didn't think about it. Do you think maybe one of my players would let me sleep in his room? I don't have a place to stay, either.

I don't know, but I doubt it. According to my records, you requested your slot in June and we OKed your event the next week. Didn't you start making any plans before now?

I forgot. It's OK, I'll figure out something. Do you have anything I could run?

When you applied you said you had a scenario.

Oh yeah. That's OK, I'll put something together. What time slot did I have?

You're scheduled for 11:00 AM tomorrow.

OK, thanks.

☎ **Sonny:** RPGA Network.

☎ **Caller:** Should I kill all the ninjas in my campaign?

How many are there?

Twelve.

(Sigh.) I would. Or I'd let them convert to monks.

No, I think I'll kill them.

☎ **Sonny:** RPGA Network.

☎ **Caller:** I was going to DM in the D&D Game Junior event, but I didn't clean my room and my mom says I can't come. Maybe next year.

☎ **Caller:** How should I kill these ninjas?

I can't wait until next year to do this again.

Sonny Scott

Admitted to the State Mental Institute 8/26/85

A View of GEN CON® 18 Game Fair from RPGA™ Network HQ

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by Michael D. Selinker

Pre-Con

Rocky crashed on Monday, and from there our problems multiplied. Rocky and Bullwinkle are TSR, Inc.'s house computer systems, and the unexpected shutdown of the one carrying the RPGA Network tournaments three days before GEN CON® 18 Game Fair heralded a week of exasperation, exhaustion, and exhilaration for those of us working on the con at RPGA™ Network HQ.

The constant calls, questions, and convention crises wouldn't have been so much of a problem were it not for the Network's tournaments, most of which were still incomplete. And to make matters worse, everyone who could have helped us was working on other material for the con.

Penny Petticord was dying, and that didn't help either. Our boss had been afflicted with a severe case of pneumonia, which she kept aggravating by skipping meals and working long nights. We kept telling her to go home and get some rest, but she knew as well as we did that we couldn't make up her workload and still complete our own. Fact was, we were all pretty much in the same situation. Few of us were getting much sleep — I saw the inside of my Lake Geneva Hilton room for all of four hours over two days, while Sonny Scott and Frank Fleming got their pre-con hour of sleep on the floor a half-dozen yards from Penny's cubicle. As for food, we took whatever few pizzas we could get our hands on.

While we weren't sleeping, eating, or recuperating, we were working frantically to get the RPGA Network tournaments ready for GEN CON Game Fair. Frank Mentzer was calmly inputting the final changes on both the Network's feature AD&D® Game tournament "Convert," and the Masters event, "Spring Fever." Sonny Scott answered Penny's phone and helped Frank Fleming assemble judge packets all day, then both of them joined in with Mike Lach, Fast Eddie Carmien, Penny, and myself to write up character personality sketches for the events all night. Meanwhile, Kelley Foote tossed a BOOT HILL® Game scenario off the top of his head in about eight hours. I did the same for the final round of Jim Ward's GAMMA WORLD® Game tournament, while Mike Lach dashed off maps and character backgrounds for it.

Penny spent her days solving crises and running the TSR Design Seminar on August 20th and 21st. (She couldn't ignore it because the profits were supposed to help pay for the RPGA Network Membership Directory, which really will be out soon.) Luckily, a slew of TSR luminaries, including Gary Gygax, Frank Mentzer, R&D Director Harold "Wisconsin" Johnson, DRAGON® Magazine fiction editor Pat Price, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Game designer Jeff Grubb, Books Editing Manager Jean Black, Tracy Hickman and Margaret Weis of DRAGONLANCE™ Adventures fame, computer expert Tim "Ollie" Cahoon, game designer Dave

"Zeb" Cook, and AMAZING™ Magazine editor George Scithers, were on hand to help Penny give the thirteen hopeful module designers (myself included) their $150 worth. In the evenings, Penny was preparing "Temple of Elemental Evil" for tournament use, editing our hastily-written material, reassigning judges, coordinating the preparations, and fixing equipment that stubbornly refused to function.

After spending hours huddled over photocopiers that were more exhausted than we were, we tossed everything into several boxes to transport to the con. Then Frank Mentzer, Mike Lach and I went home at 4:00 A.M. to catch two hours of sleep before driving to Milwaukee. Penny didn't.

Thursday

Skateboarding on a twelve-foot-long wheeled freight carrier through the MECCA loading area is a great way to release tension, but it's not recommended if your eyes keep closing of their own accord. Mike and I wheeled the many thousands of sheets of paper we had generated the previous evenings to the RPGA Network exhibit booth, and within minutes they were carted off by a group of men led by Penny's assistant, Fast Eddie Carmien.

Fast Eddie and I hated each other on Thursday; he thought I was just another Game Master that was in his way, and I thought he was just another Convention Staffer who was out of his mind. By Saturday we had become fast friends, but at the con's beginning we avoided each other like skunks avoid perfume bottles.

There was a flurry of flying paper in RPGA Network Convention HQ as judges flooded in to collect their character sheets, score sheets, maps, and other paraphernalia before the tournaments. While the DMs were briefed, Sonny and Frank Fleming went to collect the lost players and organize them into teams. (It seems that the TSR computer had sent the players of our events to at least 12 different locations, some of which didn't even exist.) Once the first teams were off to play, things settled into a slightly less chaotic routine. Some RPGA Network game masters were not getting to study their modules before judging them, and paper was everywhere in RPGA Network HQ, but for the most part things were working tolerably if not exceptionally well.

Friday

At 2:00 A.M., I awoke with the horrible realization that I hadn't had time to eat anything the day before. But the idea of scavenging the downtown Milwaukee streets for food was distasteful, if not downright dangerous. So I contented myself with two chocolates the hotel had thoughtfully provided and a viewing of the latest Chuck Norris movie, neither of which was very appetizing.

Over breakfast, Penny told me about the RPGA Network D&D Game Junior tournament, designed for players and judges aged fouteen and under. Coordinated by fourteen-year-old Alex Potente, the problem was that only two out of the twenty judges scheduled for the event had shown up. (So much for judges under 16 being permitted to judge scheduled events in the future.) Also complicating matters was the fact that we hadn't brought the character sheets for the new tournament module "Where Chaos Reigns." After the requisite number of judges were rounded up, we obtained character sheets by butchering every copy of module CM1 we had on hand for its pregenerated characters, which had to be cut out from the back covers, but that was easier than conjuring a photocopier.

Then came the first wave of Stupid Questions. Along with the approximately 2,000 reasonable queries we received each day, such as "What's a Kickbackbuck?", or "How come the results of the D&D Game Junior event aren't posted?", all manner of persons added to our infuriation with questions that should never have been asked of us. Suffice it to say that if anyone ever asks us about Fez, Snowcrystal, or the regular AD&D Game Open event again, we will point them toward Len Bland, Michael Przytarski, or Bob Blake and then run away.

Saturday

The only things Penny received from Milwaukee's Mount Sinai Hospital were a mottled green ID bracelet and three hours of convalescent nonproductivity. Since no one had bothered to look at her and her pneumonia, Penny left the hospital when the police officer gave the crash victim with the serious head injury a traffic ticket.

While she was checking herself into the hospital, we at the HQ had our own problems. We were faced with tabulating six events worth of evaluation packets, over five hundred sheets of paper in all. By this time Fast Eddie and I had honed this tabulation into a science, but we found it hard to complete all the packets with any great speed when dozens of people kept streaming into HQ asking us why we hadn't posted the results of the events that let out 4 minutes ago, and similar questions. I'm afraid we were rather gruff with some of you, and we apologize.

The other problem was with the HP 125 we had brought from TSR, Inc. Penny's absolute command of the computer made it redundant for anyone else at TSR to learn its workings. So while she was gone, I got Fast Eddie, Ollie Cahoon, Bruce Heard, and Pat Price involved in the simple matter of printing out the Masters character backgrounds. We finally finished all five sets of second round backgrounds, when it dawned on us that the first round was coming up, not the final. We rationalized our blunder by patting ourselves on the back for being twenty hours early for something. Penny then came back and completely re-edited the characters (for the better, I should add), thus making the ones we had just printed worthless.

After several hours of tabulating tournament sheets and hand-feeding typing paper through the printer, Penny and I took a break to watch the Masters tournaments (first rounds) in progress. I then went back to HQ to calculate the results of Masters I, while Penny, Fast Eddie, Sonny, Frank Fleming and Doug Behringer went off to the RPGA Network Members Meeting, where Penny got a couple of rousing rounds of applause for her efforts. The whole HQ staff was incredibly tired, but fortunately Gary Gygax and Frank Mentzer (who hadn't had much more sleep than the rest of us) were able to keep the meeting rolling and take most of the burden off of Penny's drooping shoulders.

After announcing the Masters final round teams to those who hadn't left the meeting yet, I shut down HQ, went back to the hotel, read Masters II, and made sure I got a good six hours of sleep before. . . .

Sunday

Fast Eddie did NOT want to judge round 1 of the GAMMA WORLD Game event. I didn't either, but I had an excuse; I had to print out round 2 and the Masters II characters. Thus, Fast Eddie was stuck with the job, as GW had filled up faster than any other RPGA Network event, and we needed all the judges we could find. His job turned out to be less painful than mine — I finished the stats some 30 seconds into the time I was supposed to start judging the event. I scampered up the stairs with the hastily printed sheets, while Penny was indulging herself in the luxury of lunch.

After judging the most enjoyable event in history, I had to leave town. I bid Eddie a high-spirited farewell, gave a more restrained one to Frank Mentzer, and gave Penny a big hug and a big umber hulk[1].

Sunday Night

I want bed. I want bath. I want off this airplane. But most of all, I want to ask a few favors of anyone who ever plans to attend a GEN CON Game Fair.

1. Be nice to us. Keep in mind that we are probably unfamiliar with our equipment and our surroundings, that we most likely are ill-disposed toward one another, and that we are definitely tired, underpaid, undernourished, and undercomplimented.
2. Don't ask us about rankings until a few hours after the event, and please don't ask us about things we couldn't know.
3. Don't crowd into RPGA Network HQ — just wait patiently until one of us asks if we can help you.
4. Please don't bother us if we are on one of our rare leisure breaks unless you have a heart-stopping emergency.
5. Take all your questions about RPGA Network membership to the booth in the Exhibit Hall, and preface all your questions about tournaments with the full name of the event and the round you are talking about.
6. When we offer to buy your food from you, please don't haggle.

My personal thanks go out to Harold Johnson, for the kind words when they were most needed; to Penny and Frank Mentzer, for trusting me implicitly; and to Fast Eddie, for making me earn his trust. Pleasant dreams.

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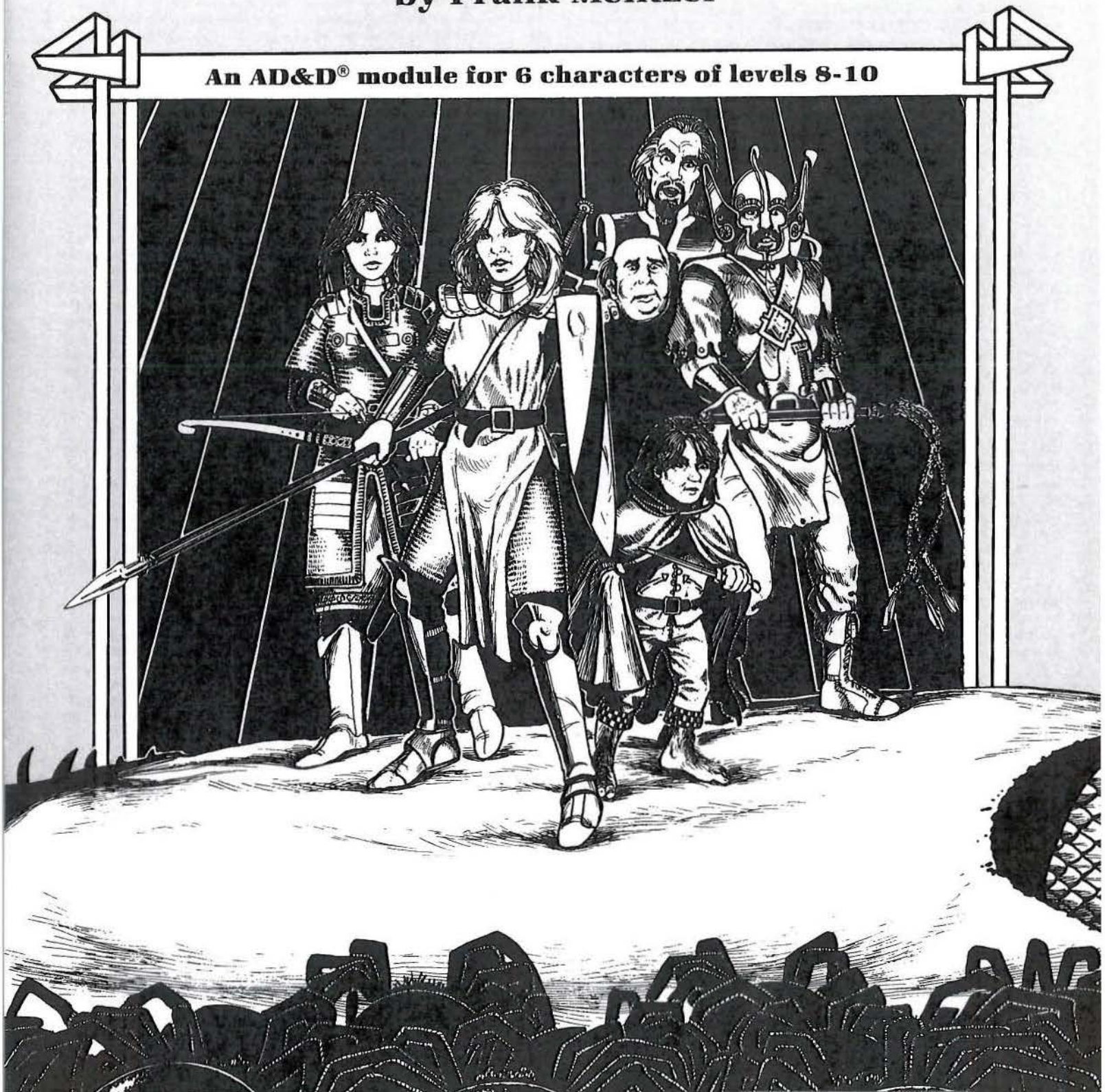
2. ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *Dungeon Masters Guide,* ©1979 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

NEEDLE

PART III: THE POWERS THAT BE

by Frank Mentzer

An AD&D® module for 6 characters of levels 8-10



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BACKGROUND FOR THE DM

"Needle" is a three-part adventure. It is the story of the discovery of an ancient obelisk, of the great task of moving it, and of the consequences.

In Part 1, "Ruins of Empire," the player characters volunteered for a special mission for their King. The royal ears had heard rumors of a great magical device, an obelisk, located in a far land. It was supposedly amidst the ruins of a once-great empire, now a dense jungle. The king wanted more information about this rumored empire and obelisk, if they existed.

The PCs sailed to the far jungle, where they encountered several odd jungle creatures, met the local natives, and found the ruins of a lost civilization. The obelisk was there, and it was still in perfect condition, protected by a force field. It stood amidst a large maze, also protected. To gather more information, they penetrated the maze, evading its deadly traps and solving its puzzles. In the center of the maze, they found the controls for the force field and more clues to the ancient empire. The PCs sailed home with the good news.

But they had just begun their epic adventure. In Part 2, "Retrieval," the king ordered the party to return to the jungle and retrieve the obelisk. His advisors prepared an elaborate plan for this monumental task, and a crew of over 150 men was dispatched under the PCs' direction. The one million pound obelisk was lifted, dragged to the shore, and towed home by ship. But, disease and jungle creatures threatened the mission's success. The local natives (froglike humanoids) were restless, as well; some believed the Needle to be sacred, and objected to its removal. Two native tribes were also in conflict; both sides asked the PCs for aid. The obelisk moving operation was completed just in time; the massed native hordes stormed the beach as the PC ships sailed off. And on the voyage home, they were attacked by pirates, sent by a rival kingdom coveting the obelisk.

In Part 3, "The Powers That Be," the obelisk has been safely erected in the king's palace square. At the first full moon, however, a magical doorway appears in its base. The king orders the characters to enter it and find out what's going on. The PCs find themselves in a subterranean world, and meet a strange race of interplanar traders who happen to be intelligent spiders. The spiders' home is soon revealed to be a moon of the characters' world — the Needle is a transportation device! The spiders are eager to trade with the Earthlings, but the PCs must first prove the courage and worth of their races. They must rescue the spider-princess from her evil captors and slay a dragon in the process. Hopefully, all goes well, and the characters return to Earth with new weapons, great treasures, and the good will of the spider race.

Notes for the DM

Before starting play, be sure to review all the creatures used in this scenario. Detailed descriptions may be found on page 20. See also page 21 for details on calculating the specifics of the Chak trade agreement with the PCs.

Characters

"Needle" is specifically designed for the characters provided in Part 1 (Issue #24). If you do not use those characters be sure that your PCs are equipped to handle the needs that arise, especially including those of communication, magical curing, and magical attacks. Also, review the entire module, and modify all the references to the PCs provided. You must also create different resolutions to some of the plot complications. For example, two of the PCs from Part 1 are not present in Part 2, but reappear in Part 3.

The Story

Begin the adventure with an audience with the king. A magical doorway has appeared in the obelisk, and the king blames the characters for this new problem. He orders them to enter the obelisk and find out what's wrong with it.

The obelisk is a transportation device which will send those who enter it to the moon. There, the characters will meet the local residents, a nation of powerful and intelligent phase spiders, who are quite pleased to see them! The spiders have an interplanar trade empire and are eager to begin trade relations with the humans. However, their last Earth customers, a nation of froglike beings, fell to squabbling among themselves. The spiders believe that this was caused by an innate lack of worthiness on the part of the frog race. The spiders will open the trade route if the human and demi-human ambassadors (the characters) pass a simple test of courage.

Just as human nature varies — Good, Neutral, and Evil — so does the nature of the spider race. And it seems that the bad guys have kidnapped the good princess and are holding her for ransom. She is being guarded by a dragon, of course. And to prove their mettle, in the grand tradition of storybook fantasy, the heroes must rescue the princess and slay the dragon.

If the characters refuse, they will be returned safely to their home, but the trade route will not be opened. If they cooperate and successfully rescue the princess, the characters will return home with the good will of the spiders, bringing the benefits of trade. The trade goods offered are a strong new metal (silicon-steel) and a new weapon that throws deadly beams of light (lightwand). By opening the trade route, the characters will receive a percentage of all the profits and a few free samples besides.

PLAYERS' BACKGROUND

Several years ago, when you were all novice adventurers, you joined an adventurers' guild known as SMART — the Syndicate of Master Adventurers for the Recovery of Treasure. Though strangers then, you came to know and respect each other's talents over the years. It is in your own best interests to keep good relations with the SMART organization and members.

You, of many volunteers, were selected by the SMART leaders to serve the king by finding a huge obelisk located in a far land — a place once powerful but now in ruins.

In Part 1 of this adventure, you sailed to the rumored location, pushed through dense and dangerous jungle, and found the obelisk standing amidst an ancient maze, protected by a mystical force field. Around it, you found traces of the once-great civilization, now long gone. In the maze, you found the controls for the protective field and rescued a powerful magic-user, a friend of the king. You presented the good news to the king upon returning. Then he announced that you had to go back and get the obelisk. Montana the (dwarf) decided to seek new adventures, and Digger (the gnome) mysteriously disappeared after trying to extort money from Slim for the return of his spell books.

In Part 2, the remaining six of you led the king's expedition (almost 150 men in 3 ships) back to the jungle. After a long 9-week operation, complicated by problems with the natives and local fauna, you set sail with the obelisk in tow. A group of pirates tried to capture it *en route* home, but you managed to thwart their ill-fated attempt.

The obelisk was laboriously towed to Royal Square, the palace courtyard, where a magnificent pedestal had been built for it. In another great operation, the obelisk was raised and safely mounted in its new location. The king was extremely pleased; he grandly bestowed useless titles on all of you, accompanied by very useful cash (another 5,000 gp each).

It is now 2 weeks after your triumphant return. Though first hailed (and pestered) as heroes, you have now been nearly forgotten by the cityfolk and the king, and are basking in the luxury of anonymity once again. This night is a busy one here in the common room of SMART headquarters. You are happily relating the tale of your travels to novice adventurers, swilling free brew, and generally enjoying the admiration of your fellow members. The light of the full moon streams through the windows, lending its air of mystery to the proceedings.

Suddenly, a messenger bursts in. "The king demands your presence at once!" he cries. "Blondy! Slim! Smiley! Ghost! Blaze! Finder! Follow me!" There are groans from your listeners, but you have no choice but to accompany the messenger. You are quickly rushed to the Great Hall of the Palace for an immediate audience. It looks as though you will have to perform whatever task must be done to placate the king's whims this third time, keeping all party members alive through the process.

You are ushered into the Great Hall for a royal audience. Before entering, all your weapons, devices, and spell components are left with the royal armorer (a standard practice). The hour is late, and the king is nearly alone; only 8 guards are present, along with Torgel (the king's friend and advisor, whom

you rescued from the jungle). But the king is upset. As you enter, he shouts, "YOU! It's all YOUR fault. That gizmo of yours is going to destroy us all!"

LAND OF THE CHAK
Notes for the DM
The King's Wrath

After much ranting and raving (which you can role-play to the hilt), the problem is revealed. At moonrise this very night — the first night of the full moon — the obelisk started making a strange humming noise, and a misty gateway appeared at the base of one side. Once he calms down a bit, the king demands that the characters enter it and find out what's going on. Torgel doesn't help matters, suggesting that the device may be a portal for an interplanar invasion.

The king insists that it's all the fault of the characters, that they will be held responsible, and that they MUST enter the thing this very night, before anything happens. If necessary, the characters will be seized, imprisoned, and subjected to Torgel's *geas* spells (2 per day maximum) until they agree to cooperate.

Now that it has been activated, the portal will remain for 1 month. When the characters agree to enter it, the king has all their belongings brought to the Great Hall, so that they may equip themselves.

Preparations

Give the **Treasure** sheet to the players, allow them to take whatever items they wish, and divide them amongst the characters for travel. Everything may be taken, if desired — even the tin man. Encourage players to take 10 minutes, at most, to review, decide upon, and divide these items.

Assume that the characters have NOT cast any spells yet this day, and are carrying a standard spell selection (that chosen before play begins). The PCs may refuse to enter the portal until they have studied spells, causing a 24-hour delay as described below.

The PCs will not be allowed to cast any spells preparatory to entering the obelisk until they are at the portal and otherwise ready to go. If they express a desire to cast preparatory spells at that time, Torgel will first cast a *wall of force* around them, encasing them next to the portal. The characters may then cast all they like, and enter. If they do not enter before the duration of the *wall of force* ends (23 rounds), they will be stripped and imprisoned for another day, and then equipped and prepared in the same way.

Finder

If you are using the pregenerated characters from Part 1 (Issue #24), brief your Finder player in private before play begins. Finder's church has become interested in the obelisk, and has, through *commune* spells and other magical efforts, determined that it is a gateway to another world. The church has summoned Finder and instructed him to ensure peaceful and profitable relations with any alien races the group might encounter. If necessary, he is to reveal his true Charisma and take charge of the negotiations. However, Finder must not reveal this information to the king or the adventuring party before embarking on the mission.

Role-Playing

The dialogue with the Chak can be a source of much entertainment, especially if you take the time to personalize the NPCs. For example, try using a bright, happy voice for Ackack, and a low, gravelly one for King Sarkum. (One tournament DM got a great deal of mileage from the conversations by assuming that Sarkum was not as well-versed in Common as his son, and would often falter in the midst of a sentence, think for a moment, then continue after a murmured conversation with Ackack.)

after a murmured conversation with Ackack.)

Encounter Key
1. Start

The characters temporarily lose all their normal senses upon entering the portal. The next thing they know, they are all standing intact in a new place.

2. Arrival

You suddenly find yourselves in a large room, standing on a large, irregular, yellowish metallic object of some kind, about 10′ above a reddish metal floor. A steep ramp descends down to floor level before you. All around you are hundreds of shiny black spiders, each about 4′ across. They nearly fill the floor of the room, which is about 100′ square. Dozens of light sources are scattered around the room, apparently held by the spiders; they are brighter than candles, but dimmer than magical light. It is enough, however, to see that the walls are also ornately decorated metal, and the smooth metal ceiling is about 20′ above your heads. There are no visible exits.

What do you want to do?

The characters are not yet aware that they are standing on the broad back of a brass dragon, which is curled up into a sort of altar. The steep ramp in front of the characters is actually one wing; the other is folded flat to the body behind the party. The dragon's neck, head, and legs are tucked neatly underneath, and are not visible at this time.

There are over 200 Chak (rhymes with "jack" — a race of intelligent phase spiders) crowded into this room. They have been awaiting the arrival of the characters.

If the party attacks, the dragon will lift its head and breathe sleep gas. You may run the battle if you like, or simply summarize the outcome. All characters who do not eventually fail a saving throw vs. the dragon's breath and fall asleep will be overcome by the massed hordes of Chak, who will capture them and render them unconscious. The characters awaken later, in a cell (see **Prisoners**).

If the party takes no immediate action, soft clicking sounds start coming from the spiders, increasing in volume to a loud din, which lasts for about a minute and then subsides. (This is applause.) The characters then become suddenly aware that all the spiders are sitting down, somehow, because one of them near the party stands up, rising a foot or two above its fellows. It addresses the characters, in (human) Common!

3. Reception

The spider speaks. "Greetings, travelers from the great and noble planet of Earth! We welcome you with open legs" — it demonstrates by waving its two front appendages — "in the name of our great and glorious king, Sarkum of Tatz. Gee whiz! It's great to have you here."

The spider turns and starts bobbing and nodding madly at the rest, and cries of "Gee whiz!" come from most of the creatures present. The leader waits for them to die down, then turns to you once again.

"I am Ackack, spokeschak for our humble race. Gee whiz! Please allow me to personally welcome you to the land of Tatz! Are you violent or hostile?"

The odd and effervescent speech of the Chak may give the impression of foolishness, but this is not the case. Although they are virtually bubbling with friendliness, the Chak are a shrewd, highly intelligent race. They fully expect the characters to react with caution, and will not react adversely to spell casting of any sort, nor to weapons in hand. If the characters attack, however, the dragon rises and breathes, putting all the PCs to sleep (see above).

Ackack is interested, at the moment, in identifying the racial makeup of the party. He has met humans before, but not demihumans. He will answer a few questions, if asked, but will insist on getting the answers to his.

After the opening speech, Ackack urges the characters to descend from the "landing platform" and join the Chak. If they cooperate, they will be surrounded and touched by most of the spiders present. This is a form of greeting and also a means for the Chak to get the scent of the characters. The Chak will be uneasy until they do this. No harm comes of it.

During the course of subsequent conversation, Ackack will seek answers to the following questions:

a. What are the characters' names and races?

b. How did they get here? (And then, how did they get the obelisk?)

c. Do humans and demi-humans come in various sizes, shapes, and sexes?

d. Are there "good" and "bad" humans and demi-humans, or are they all of one philosophy?

e. Do any or all of the characters use a power commonly known as "magic"?

f. Are the characters, or their rulers, interested in material wealth?

Ackack will reveal the following things during conversation:

a. His race is called the Chak.

b. The Chak are travelers and traders, voyaging between the planets and very planes of existence in their pursuit of commerce.

c. The Chak have traded with Earth in the past, but that trade stopped when the Earth people had a civil war. (Ackack will describe the froglike beings if questioned.)

d. The Chak would like to resume trade with the humans and demi-humans as soon as possible.

e. The "pedestal" upon which the characters arrived is a brass dragon. His name is Tallytal. (Upon hearing his name, the dragon gives a snort and sits up. He cannot speak.)

f. The obelisk is a device constructed by the Chak. It is a teleporter.

g. The obelisk can receive, as well as send, but the Chak will not send the party back until the characters have spoken with King Sarkum himself.

In addition, if the characters show some of their "curiosities" to Ackack, he will comment on them:

Coins: These are all coins of the Chak realm. Each is made of the standard reddish metal, called NAK, and named after the king (Sarkum). "Garsha Koo" is Chak language for "Gee whiz!"

The 4 worn coins are at least 10,000 years old; the metal does not wear down quickly. The Chak offer the characters 5 normal Sarkums for each old one. The Chak also have small tenth-Sarkum coins, and will show them for comparison.

Bones: The holes in the skulls were made by a lightwand, identical to the one possessed by the characters but with a minor attachment. Many of the Chak present carry lightwands, but will not demonstrate their function at this time.

The four-armed humanoid skeletons are those of Earth creatures called glommers. This is an unnatural breed, similar to normal Earth apes, but created by some evil Chak.

Tin Humanoid: This is a metal golem of Chak construction, and it can be activated by the proper command word. The oil can is of no use. The command word is known to the king's advisor.

Spider Amulet: This is a relic belonging to the bad guys. Ackack will offer no clarification at this time.

Cutter: If the nak cutter (8" long with roller and blade) is displayed, Ackack will insist that the party must turn it over. It is a taboo item for outsiders to possess while within Sarkum's Palace, but it will be returned later. If necessary, the Chak will swarm over the party to retrieve the item, and the dragon is always there with his sleep breath. However, if the characters do not reveal their possession of a cutter, no problems will arise; it will not be found.

Ackack will politely admire any other items shown, but has no special comments about them. He will politely decline to give answers other than those noted above, saying that the king (or his court) will surely clear everything up. ("Gee whiz!")

After the above topics are covered, Ackack suggests that the characters may rest, or may visit the king immediately, if they wish. (Each option is covered hereafter.)

Prisoners (Special)

If the characters have attacked the Chak at any point, they have been put to sleep by the breath of Tallytal, or have been overcome by the massed Chak and captured, or both. They awaken some time later, stripped of everything and lying in a bare cell. After a few hours, they are brought to see King Sarkum (see **Royal Audience** #6).

4. Leaving Tatz Hall

Whatever option is chosen, the characters will be escorted from the Hall by Ackack and most of the Chak present.

> Ackack produces a metal cutter from his underside. You realize that he, and presumably all of the Chak, have pouches, similar to those of kangaroos. The cutter is identical to the one you found in the maze. Ackack climbs the far wall and quickly cuts a 6′ diameter hole in it, revealing a nak metal-sheathed tunnel of the same size.

If the characters mention or produce their cutter, note the unfavorable results as described above (comments about curiosities).

Ackack leads the party from the Hall. He and the party are surrounded at all times by many other Chak with the remainder following behind. The dragon remains in Tatz Hall.

5. Tunnel World

It soon becomes apparent that the Chak live in an underground community of tunnels and rooms, all lined with nak metal. During this entire adventure, the characters are never permitted to roam the tunnels at will, and thus maps of them are not needed.

If the characters (stupidly) want to attack while in the tunnels, warn the players that no good opportunity exists, and try hard to discourage this. Several Chak to the rear have (unnoticed by the characters) armed their lightwands, and they are prepared to destroy the party if trouble arises. In addition, the Chak near the characters may attack with their poisonous bites.

6. Royal Audience

If the characters have been put to sleep by the dragon's breath and captured, they will still receive the same treatment as given below, but will be brought before the king absolutely naked and unequipped.

> The Chak escort you through the sleek nak-metal corridors. You pass occasional side routes where even more spiders scurry about, all apparently busy. Some stop to watch your passage, and then continue about their business.
>
> After about a half-mile of travel, you come to a large area (still lined with nak) with a 20′ square hole in the wall ahead. Passing through this, you arrive in another large chamber, ornately adorned and occupied by dozens of Chak. At the far end is a great spiderweb, and in its center is a huge spider, at least 10′ across. This must be King Sarkum himself! The king is surrounded by a dozen large Chak, each about 5′ across and each holding a lightwand.
>
> Ackack speaks. "Hail, O great and powerful Sarkum, most splendid of Tatz, Chak-father, Supreme Ruler, Conqueror of the Inner Planes! Greetings, Father-mine, Wisest of Wise, Strongest of Strong, Eater of Foolish Guests! Gee Whiz!"
>
> Sarkum replies, "Gee Whiz!" in a deep, rumbling bass voice. All the Chak in the hall immediately fall to the floor and echo the words "Gee Whiz!" three times in chorus.

If the PCs do not do the same, they are cued by whispers and tugs from the Chak around them. A simple kneeling will do, but full prone position will please the king the most. Adjust the following commentary as needed if the characters are not properly respectful to this foreign monarch.

> Sarkum speaks again. "Gee Whiz! Rise, our people and guests!" Everyone rises. "Greetings, ambassadors! Greetings, our son Ackack. Who are our guests?" Ackack tells the king everything you revealed during the question-and-answer session in Tatz Hall. The king seems pleased. "You have done well. Gee whiz! We never liked those frogs anyway." Sarkum then turns to you. "Who speaks for your group?"

One of the PCs must act as spokesperson for the party. Sarkum will address that person hereafter.

"Gee whiz! We welcome you to Tatz, and hope that your stay is a pleasant one. We are but simple trader folk, and travelers. We would like you to trade with us. Are you interested?"

7. Trading Session

The following details are revealed in the course of the trading session.

a. The PCs may return home without a trade agreement, if they wish. If so, this will occur within 1 hour, and the Chak will try contacting some other nation of Earth.

b. If a trade agreement is reached, the party will receive 1% of the price of all goods sold by the Chak, payable in Sarkums to divide amongst themselves.

c. The Chak are interested in magic items, live giant insects (food), or Good dragons as trade goods from Earth. No other Earth goods are of interest. Refer to the separate section **Values of Items** for prices offered, and note that they vary by Sarkum's reaction to the characters.

d. Sarkum will trade with the characters for items carried immediately if they wish, regardless of any trade agreements with the Earth people in general.

e. The Chak trade goods offered are nak (the reddish metal) and lightwands. (See **Value of Items**, pg. 22, for going prices and full descriptions.)

When they hear the prices offered for insects and dragons, the characters may wish to return home, gather some, and return. This will not be permitted as yet. If the characters return home without finalizing the trade agreement, the deal is off, and they will not be contacted again.

8. The Proposition

After working out trade details, and possibly trading with the player characters, Sarkum makes another speech.

"It is a pleasure dealing with you. We hope that this marks the beginning of a long and mutually beneficial relationship.

"However, we yet have some doubts. The greenies were also fair traders, and pleasant enough at first, but they were unstable. We believe that they were lacking in the stuff that makes a people great. Gee whiz!

"Before we finalize our agreement, can you convince us that your people are worthy of our trust and wealth?"

Allow the characters to try their best, but Sarkum will not be convinced by mere words. If player characters suggest a test of their courage and power, Sarkum will be pleased: he was about to make the same proposal.

Sarkum explains the following situation to the characters. The manner of presentation will vary, depending on whether he or a party member suggested the test.

Sarkum's daughter (Princess Keelee of Tatz) has been kidnapped by the bad guys and is being held for ransom. If the characters rescue her, they will prove themselves worthy, the trade agreement will be finalized, and the party will be returned home safely, becoming Earth's official Ambassadors to the Chak. To aid them on the perilous mission, the characters may take two free lightwand weapons with fully charged rings. A reward of 25 Sarkums per person is also offered. Bargaining is ignored.

If the characters decline the offer, they are sent home within a few minutes, and the trade offer is closed. If they balk, suggesting some other service, Sarkum will insist that this is his only offer.

9. A Briefing

When his offer is accepted, Sarkum introduces an advisor, Chumley, who gives further information.

"Just as you humans may be good, evil, or neither, so too are the Chak. Renegade bands lurk here and there in our world, but the fiercest and worst is a group of twenty-one called the Black Chak. They are led by the notorious criminal, Gritch the Grinder."

At the mention of this name, all the Chak in the room start a tremendous growling, which subsides only after the king shouts, "Gee whiz!". Chumley continues.

"Gee whiz. The Black Chak have stolen beautiful Princess Keelee, and we are most sorrowful. We cannot get her back ourselves! Gee whiz! As we, the good Chak of Tatz, ally with the noble lizards — you met old Tallytal, I believe — the Black Chak wallow and glumph with the vilest specimens of that race. Some breathe fire, some lightning, cold, acid. . . . it is a barpling situation indeed. Gee whiz!"

Cries of "Gee whiz!" echo from around the room, but the King remains silent. Chumley continues again, after the noise subsides:

"The evil Gritch —" Chumley is interrupted again, by growling. "The Black Chak leader is demanding many magic items for Keelee's return. If you cannot help us, we must pay their awful price.

"Now, a few words about our land. Gee whiz! You have seen our beautiful scenic tunnels, so no description is needed of them. Beyond our humble abode, however, the purity of nak ends, and the tunnels become rough-hewn and crooked. We will give you a drawing of the routes to Gri . . . to the lair of the Black Chak.

"Oh yes! Gee whiz! The air we breathe fills all the tunnels, but is not found elsewhere. Stay in the tunnels, at all costs! The surface of our world is airless and bleak. We will show you a glimpse of it before you depart.

"The evil ones appear just as we, but we know their foul stench; they dare not come here, lest we get them, and STOMP them, and RIP them into little PIECES and FEED them to our DRAGONS, and TEAR off their LEGS and BITE them and KILL them and . . ." During his speech, several other Chak have begun chanting along with him and have worked themselves nearly into a frenzy. Chumley stops, suddenly, and things quiet down. He continues.

"Humph. As you may not be able to tell the difference by smell, assume that all therein are evil. All but Princess Keelee, of course. Gee whiz! You must find some way to tell her from the others, I guess. Do not harm her! Even the vilest of the evil ones do not dare that; even they fear the power of our great and glorious King Sarkum.

"The evil ones have few lightwands, only those they have stolen from us. They lack our great trade empire, so they cannot get nak or lightwands from the —"

Chumley is suddenly interrupted by a great "ha-RUMPH!" from King Sarkum. He falters, and continues. "Eight pardons, O great King. Anyhow, the evil ones are not nearly as powerful as we, and glumph with other nasties to reassure themselves. They have slaves, things that look like you . . . well, almost; they have four arms. Gee whiz! And fear, and flee, the great false one, the Chak that is not a Chak, big as a king, death incarnate. Beware!"

An echoing chorus of "beware" comes from all the Chak present; even the king joins in for a moment.

"Do you have any questions?"

The Chak have seen the "great false one", a spider-being as large as King Sarkum, in the far tunnels. They know that it is not a true Chak, because it smells wrong. It looks very dangerous. Other than that, they know nothing about it, but they assume that it is a friend of the Black Chak.

The "rock creatures" are simply beings that look like rocks and can hurt you, but the Chak know nothing more of them, either.

The king's advisor knows how to activate and control the tin man (a golem). He will sell this information for 10 Sarkums, or will buy the golem back for 20 Sarkums. Refer to the **Monster Descriptions** (pg. 20) for details.

If asked how the tunnels are made, the king's advisor tells the characters of how great purple worms, up to 30′ long, are trained to dig for them. These creatures are called chompers. Trained ones are nearly harmless; wild ones are very dangerous.

Before you go, the king adds a final word. "If you come back without our dear Keelee, you will have failed, and we shall find someone else to trade with — people of courage. Gee whiz! You may leave."

10. View From a Height

Some time before leaving for the rescue mission, the PCs are taken to the Chak observatory for a look at the surface world. Use this encounter whenever it is convenient.

> You climb a long spiral ramp through solid rock, accompanied by Ackack and several other Chak carrying lightwands. The passage is completely lined with nak, and it finally ends in a wall of the same metal. Ackack produces a cutting tool, makes a small incision, and listens. "No hiss!" he says happily, and continues to cut open a circular doorway. He steps through, and the rest cautiously follow.
>
> You enter a large hemispherical dome of nak, the doorway being just above the flat floor. The dome is about 60′ across. It is all featureless, and nothing happens. You all wait for a few minutes, and the Chak lightwands start to go out, one by one. None are reactivated. Ackack tells you not to produce any light sources, but to wait. Finally, the last Chak lightwand blinks out, and the room is plunged into total darkness.
>
> You hear a loud clunk, as if some metal mechanism has been activated. Above you, a crack appears in the dome; it has split into two halves, and they are sliding down to either side.
>
> There, above you, is a night sky. A huge ball of soft light beams down from directly overhead. Around it, glittering like thousands of diamonds on black velvet, are stars, more and brighter stars than you have ever witnessed. It is an awesome sight, and everyone stands in silence for a few moments. Then Ackack softly interrupts the silence with two words, as he gestures toward the great luminous orb in the heavens: "Your home."

The area to the sides of the dome is visible once the dome cover is retracted. The bleak and barren moonscape is marked by huge mountains, inky black shadows, and a total lack of vegetation, water, or anything else but rock. The dome itself is a glassy substance, barely visible. There is no air outside of it.

When the PCs are ready to depart, Ackack does something to a section of floor, and the halves of the dome cover start to rise once again. But suddenly, a huge avian shape rises from a lunar valley nearby, its wings outstretched but not moving. The creature is heading for the observatory.

"Flee! Flee!" cries Ackack, and the Chak rush out to the ramp. (The party should do the same.) After he passes the doorway, Ackack shouts, "Quickly! I must seal the passage!" He puts the nak disc back in place as soon as the characters are out of the observatory, but he will not wait long, so anyone who hesitates may be walled in. Ackack quickly rolls the edges of the doorway disc, sealing it perfectly with the cutting tool. As he does so, a loud CRUNCH comes from inside the room.

"Just in time!" pants Ackack. "Gee whiz; have to fix that later." If questioned, he describes the two predatory creatures of the lunar surface: rock creatures, which stand about 10′ tall, and huge birds like the one just seen, which have a 70′ wingspread. "They appear similar to birds of your world," Ackack comments, "but have adapted to ours. Great and fierce creatures they are, who do not know fear. You will probably not encounter any in your travels, but if you do, beware! Gee whiz! They are called Moon Rocs."

THE TUNNELS OF THE BLACK CHAK
Notes for the DM
Wandering Monsters

During the rescue mission, the party may run across wandering bowlers or wild chompers. Check once during each 120′ of travel. A 1 on 1d6 indicates a random encounter, with either 1-4 bowlers (75% chance) or 1 wild chomper (25% chance). Bowlers will be seen at 40′ range; a chomper will arrive by tunneling from the top, bottom, or either side (equal chances of each), at a distance of 2′-40′ (2d20).

Bowler: AL N; MV 6″ or special; HD ½ + 1 (hp 2-5); AC 4; THAC0 20*; #AT 1 crush; Dmg = bowler hp; SZ S-M; IN Semi; STs 19, STw 18.

Special Attacks: 50% chance of surprising opponents within 40′; gain +1″/round movement to 15″ maximum when charging.

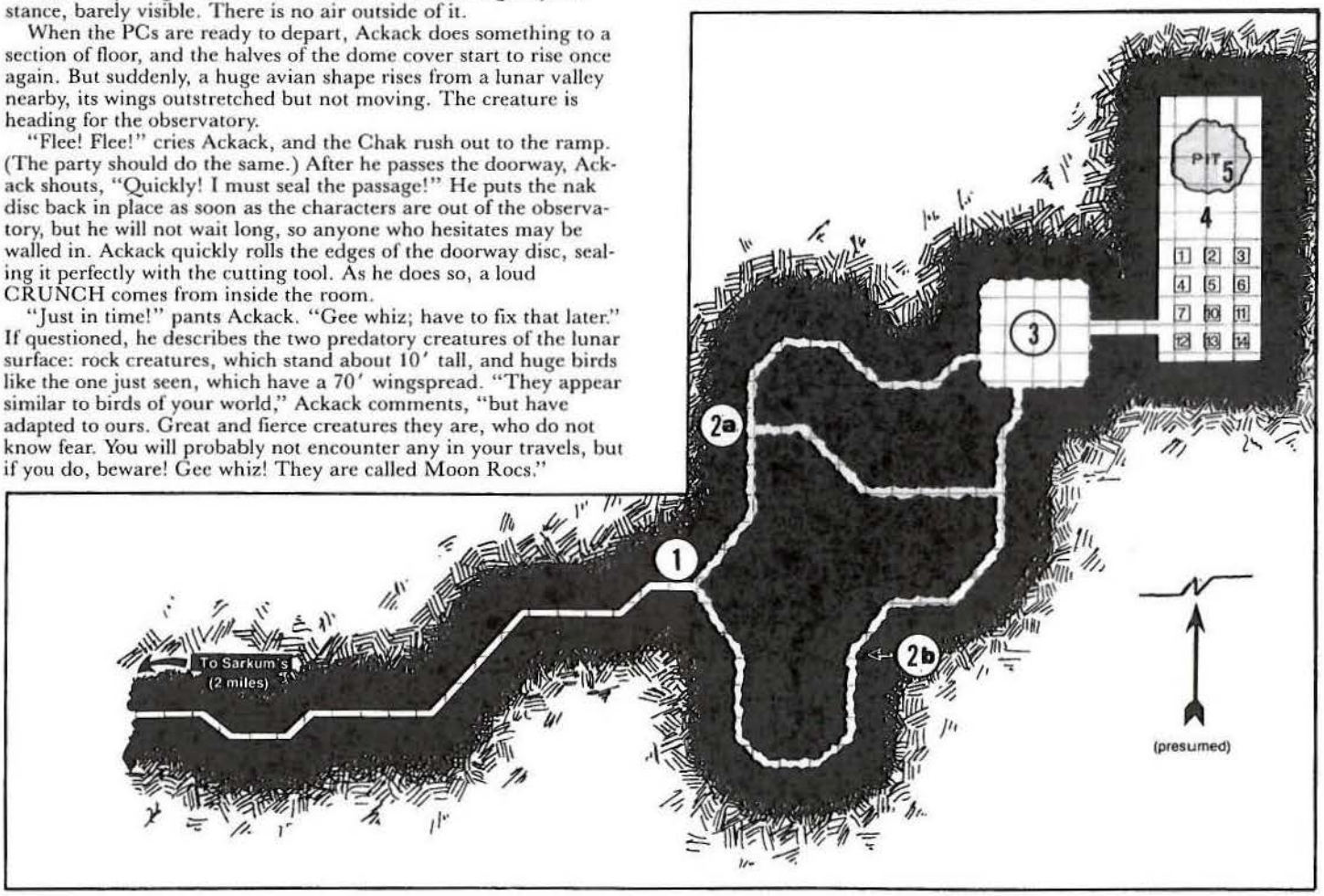
Chomper: AL N; MV 9″; HD 9; hp 40; AC 5; THAC0 12; #AT 1 bite/1 tail stinger; Dmg 2d8/1d4 + poison (paralysis); SZ L; IN Ani; STs 14, STw 13.

Special Attacks: Tail sting (save vs. poison or suffer paralysis for 2-12 turns).

Notes About Digger and Montana

Before round 2 of this tournament began, Digger tried to extort money from Slim for the return of his spell books (usually kept in Digger's *bag of holding*). His plan was foiled by magic, and he was forced to run for it, barely escaping with his life. His large hoard was confiscated, and his life was in ruins.

During the recovery of the obelisk, he found Montana (who had been exploring elsewhere and knew nothing of the extortion) and they joined another party for further adventuring. Weeks later, after the PCs returned with the obelisk and were then railroaded into



entering it, he suggested to Montana that together they might also enter the obelisk to aid their old friends, if needed. Montana readily agreed.

The pair chatted with Tallytal the brass dragon, evaded the yukky spiders (whom Montana hated), and headed off into the tunnels. They were eventually beset by the Black Chak and got separated. Digger made the best of the situation, joining the Black Chak, while Montana hid in the tunnels, trying to survive.

Digger is currently working with and for the Black Chak, and especially the blue dragon Henkus (see Encounter #5, pg. 19).

Encounter Key

1. Lunar Excursion

Characters will be allowed to rest as long as desired before setting out on the rescue mission. Give the Tatz Tunnels map to the players, and refer to your own map for the upcoming journey. Remember to give the party two lightwands, with fully charged rings. Their cash reward will be paid later, if they are successful.

Critical Note: If the PCs do not possess a cutter, the Chak will lend them one "just in case." Ignore this if the PCs have bought a cutter or have brought theirs.

Most of the journey is along a single passage which leads to the west side of the map. Then a choice appears — the PCs may continue east by two routes, marked 2a or 2b on your map. Only one encounter can occur on either route, as given hereafter. Be sure that a marching order is established, and be aware of party light sources, spells running, and so forth.

> You gallantly set forth on your trek. A few Chak escort you for the first mile or so, but then they wish you good luck, give a final cheerful "Gee whiz!", and depart. The nak-lined tunnel continues for a great distance, but finally the limits of civilization (such as it is) are reached, and the corridor becomes rough, bare rock. You continue onward, cautiously, and travel for a few more hours. Strange thoughts are in your minds. You are a long way from home, trapped here under the bleak lunar surface. How ironic it is: you began this bizarre journey at the whims of your king, only to be trapped by the whims of another! "Gee whiz", as your new friends would say.
>
> You come to a point where the corridor branches to the northeast and southeast. And here, lying on the floor, is a broken crossbow bolt. You examine it with interest and note a puzzling fact: the colors of the fletching are somehow familiar . . . . Of course! This matches the bolts carried by your old friend, Montana! But she couldn't be HERE — could she?

There are no traces of anyone's passage in this area. If Finder's *arrow of direction* is used, it will point to the northeast passage, regardless of what is asked.

2. Tunnel Encounter

> You cautiously continue through the tunnel, your lights piercing the darkness ahead. The tunnel winds about, ever turning, and you can see little of what lies ahead — or behind.

Now refer to either 2a or 2b, hereafter, as applicable.

2a. Worm!

> Suddenly, about 30′ ahead of the front character, the right wall of the tunnel caves in! And squirming out from it is a huge wormlike monster, purple in color. Its head is at least 5′ across, and rows of teeth line its gaping mouth. It turns its head toward you, but its body is still mostly in the hole it has made. What do you want to do?

This is a 30′ long chomper. It is a tame one, and its two keepers, Glump and Nargitch, are close behind it.

If the PCs attack immediately, they will not be able to hear the cries of the Chak. The chomper panics when attacked, and starts to burrow DOWN into the tunnel floor. It squeals each time it is damaged. Nargitch will peer out from the new tunnel entrance to see who is making all the trouble, with weapon (lightwand) in hand. If the characters attack him, he will return their attacks, and Glump will join in whenever possible. If defeat appears imminent, both of the Chak will phase out and return home. (Note that their weapons will remain behind if they phase out.)

If the PCs do not attack immediately, the chomper turns AWAY from them, closely followed by the keepers. They will notice the party with surprise, and ask, "Who are YOU?" They will talk peacefully, if permitted to do so, but will always keep their lightwands at ready. The keepers will explain that they and Fred (the chomper) are busily making new tunnels, and that this is a common practice. If questioned, the keepers claim that they are loyal to King Sarkum.

The Chak chomper-keepers are, of course, Black Chak, loyal to Gritch the Grinder. If attacked after initial conversation, both will put up a good fight, but will phase out if severely damaged. (The chomper will try to escape by tunneling downwards.) If somehow taken prisoner, the Chak will reveal nothing.

If the characters follow the new tunnel created by the chomper, they will cross down to tunnel 2b.

Chomper: AL N; MV 9″; HD 9; AC 5; THAC0 12; #AT Nil; SZ L; IN Ani; STs 14, STw 13.

Chak: AL LE; MV 9*21; HD 5; AC 5; THAC0 15; #AT 2 shots or 1 bite; Dmg 2d8/2d8 or 1d6 + poison; IN Average; STs 14, STw 13.

Special Attacks: Poisonous bite; lightwands (13 charges each).

2b. Rolling Stones

> As you trudge along, you get the feeling you're being watched. Suddenly, a character in the rear of the group is slammed for 10 points of damage. Looking behind, you see three large boulders where there was once clear corridor. One of the boulders has just slammed into you, and it has come to a stop close by. The others are within 20′. What do you want to do?

The three rocks are a galeb duhr and two animated boulders. One of the boulders has just hit a character; the galeb duhr is the one furthest away from the party.

Caleb the galeb duhr lives in this general area and has become annoyed at the sound of intruders. Using a *passwall* to enter from a nearby tunnel, he has sent his boulders after the party.

If the PCs attack, Caleb will back off to maximum (60′) control range while the boulders attack fearlessly. The two animated boulders will block the passage of all visible PCs, shielding Caleb from attack. An invisible character may sneak by them, if desired. If the boulders are becoming badly damaged, Caleb will retreat into the side tunnel. As he does so, the boulders suddenly stop and fall over. Caleb immediately closes off his escape route with a *wall of stone*.

If Caleb is attacked magically from a distance, he will flee immediately, whatever the damage. If he is engaged by a PC moving in invisibly, he will drop concentration on the boulders and create a 10′ pit under the offender (via *passwall*), and then flee. The character must make a saving throw vs. spells; failure means falling into the pit, for 1-6 points of damage, but success indicates that the victim has grabbed the edge of the pit.

If the characters back off and attempt to communicate, Caleb will stop the boulders, leaving them as cover, and will shout from a distance. Unfortunately, he does not speak or understand any of the characters' languages. Finder's magical helm will also fail to decipher Caleb's language; a *tongues* spell is needed. As long as the PCs keep peacefully attempting to communicate, Caleb will keep the boulders from attacking.

If a *tongues* spell is used, Caleb introduces himself and his two hard-headed allies, Thuga and Thugy. (The boulders bow politely when introduced.) Caleb explains that he thought the party was a group of intruders from Gritch, and will apologize if the characters reveal that they have come from King Sarkum. If asked, he notes that he met "two little 'uns, sorta like you; the little one gave me a BIG drink of water from a tiny bottle" (this was Digger, accompanied by Montana). He does not remember other details, as all humanoids look alike to him. Since Caleb ignores time utterly, he cannot even estimate when the pair came by — ten minutes ago, or ten weeks.

When the PCs are ready to leave him, Caleb suddenly says, "Hey! Want some junk?" He has found a nak-metal box, about 1 foot square. If allowed, he will retrieve it and give it to the party; he has no use for it. The box is ornately etched (a feat impossible for the characters to duplicate, even with a cutter or magic), obviously valuable, and locked (standard chances of picking). It contains 20 Sarkums. The box is worth 5 Sarkums, or 750 gp if sold on Earth.

Animated boulders: 2; AL N; MV 3"; HD 9; hp 40 each; AC 0; THAC0 12; AT 1 crush; Dmg 4d6; SZ L; IN Non; STs 16, STw 15.

Special Defenses: Resistances as galeb duhr.

Galeb Duhr: AL N; MV 6"; HD 9; hp 60; AC -2; THAC0 10; #AT 1 bite; Dmg 2d8, 3d6, or 4d6; SZ L (10'); IN Very; STs 10, STw 9.

Special Attacks: Spells.

Passwall (C 5s, R 3", DR 26T, 5'x 8'x 10' deep)
Stone Shape (C 1r, R Touch, DR Permanent, 20 cuf)
Transmute Rock to Mud (C 5s, R 20", DR 1d6 days per 10' cube, Volume 40,000 cuf)
Wall of Stone (C 5s, R 10", DR Permanent, Area 5' thick, 400 sqf)
Move Earth (C 1T/40'sq, R 20", DR Permanent; affects clay, loam, sand, but not rock).

Special Defenses: Double damage from cold (save for normal); +4 bonus vs. magic fire; immune to lightning and normal fire.

3. Guardian

Both corridors 2a and 2b lead to this large room, and there is no way past it. The characters may approach it as a group, or they may check it by scouting ahead.

> Peering ahead, you see a large dimly lit room, about 80' square and 20' high. Four lightwands are mounted on the walls, one in each corner, about 12' up. A nak-lined, 10'-diameter corridor exits from the center of the west wall, sloping upward.
>
> Standing in the middle of the room, with its left side towards you, is a huge Chak-like creature, about 12' tall. You note that its four front legs end in large sharp claws, and that it has several eyes. It shifts slightly, starting to turn away from you.

The following material applies only if you are using the characters supplied in Part 1 of "Needle" (Issue #24). Adjust it as you see fit for your campaign. You may give the characters a chance to save Montana if desired, but be aware of possible problems created by the addition of an extra character. If you do allow Montana to be rescued, her knowledge of certain events must be restricted. Assume that she has not seen Digger since they were separated in battle with some Black Chak, and that she is unaware that Digger has since sold out to the opposition. Allowing her to know any more information than this will cause problems with the final encounter.

> Suddenly, sounds come from the western corridor — much clacking and running footsteps! Two Chak appear, scurrying down into the room, and pursuing them — it's MONTANA, ferociously attacking the spiders! Her upraised broadsword glows bright and shows signs of successful use; indeed, the Chak appear to be damaged.
>
> But before you can act, the huge creature has turned toward them, moving with great speed. Montana sees it, but she hesitates. Then a bright bluish ray of light shoots forth from one of the huge spider's eyes and strikes her squarely! She topples with a thud — a very loud thud. She has been turned to stone!
>
> The two Chak turn to the large creature and clack at it a few times, and it clacks back. They then start back up the corridor, leaving the creature in the room. It turns away from the stairway and resumes a watchful position.

This is the guardian of the entrance to the Black Chak lair, a retriever (*FIEND FOLIO® Tome*, pg. 75). This construct was made by Demogorgon in the Abyss and was traded to the Black Chak for items and favors that have no bearing here. It is a modified, simple version, unable to transmute victims into mud, lead, or gold.

The retriever will not leave this room. If the PCs attack it from a distance, without entering the room, it will fire all its eyes down the tunnel at them, as quickly as possible, and then move to one side, out of sight. If the characters try to make a run for it, the retriever will quickly move to block the western tunnel.

The retriever has only a 1 in 6 chance of detecting an invisible intruder. However, once it detects one, it can follow easily, but with the standard -4 penalty on "to hit" rolls. If an eye ray is used against an invisible character, the victim gains a +4 bonus to the applicable saving throw.

Note that the retriever has no special immunities and that it will die fairly quickly if the PCs attack properly. However, there may be a death or two if the players are not careful. Choose eye targets randomly among potential victims, but try to spread out the damage, not aiming at one character twice. Rely on melee (those cleavers are nasty) if possible. The retriever will fight to the death.

Retriever: AL CE; MV 18"; HD 10; hp 60; THAC0 10; #AT 4 cleavers and 2 eyes; Dmg 3d6 (x4) + special; SZ L; IN Low; STs 11, STw 10.

Special Attacks: 4 Eyes, each with 60' range, 2/round maximum. Once used, cannot be used again for 6 rounds (recharging). Eye effects: Fire, Cold, Lightning, Transmutation (just used); Damage equals retriever's current hp, against 1 victim only, victim may make a saving throw vs. breath to take ½ damage; Transmute ray turns to stone (only), victim may make a saving throw vs. petrification to avoid the effect entirely.

3a. Residents

Adjust the following material to fit your campaign situation.

> The creature finally falls. You quickly check the fallen statue; it is indeed Montana. She and her equipment have been petrified. Then you hear noise coming from the west corridor: clacking again.

A group of Black Chak have heard the noise of battle, waited, and heard it stop. They are coming to gather up the bodies of the (presumably) slain intruders. When they see the body of the retriever instead, they will panic, scurrying back up the corridor; they can barely conceive of something powerful enough to defeat the awesome retriever.

The Black Chak will flee regardless of PC actions. The characters may try to ambush them, attack them as they descend, or hide, but the results will be the same.

The word will quickly be spread, and most of the Black Chak will flee from the fierce invading PCs. If the characters pursue quickly, any Chak encountered will phase out rather than face them. The corridors will be empty within minutes.

The western corridor leads directly to the jail, #4.

4. Jail

> The tunnel from the retriever's room curves upward slightly, rising 10' over its 50' length before connecting to another room.
>
> This area is very large, almost 200' long, 70' wide, and 30' tall. The walls, floor, and ceiling are lined with nak metal. Twelve protrusions from the floor, each 10' square and 2' tall, are also nak-covered. On the floor at the north end of the room is a pit, 50' across.
>
> Twenty small tunnels, each about 5' across and lined with nak, exit the room along the west wall by the floor. You catch glimpses of several Chak therein, but they back off quickly when they see you.
>
> You hear someone crying, somewhere. It sounds human.

The crying is coming from cell #10; it is Digger. (See below for more information.)

Discourage the players from entering the western tunnels. They lead to other areas of the Black Chak lair, and they are

neither needed nor mapped for this adventure. If players persist, describe the other areas briefly (small rooms, many more tunnels, some webs, no treasure). They will all be abandoned by the frightened Black Chak.

Each of the protrusions on the jail floor is the top of a 10′ cubic box, set into the floor. There are prisoners in all of the boxes. A *detect invisible* spell reveals dozens of tiny holes (for air) in the top of each box. Close examination will find an inscription on each box, and Finder's helm can translate these.
They are simply the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14, one per box as noted on the map. (These are consecutive numbers, using base 8.)

The box-cells have been enchanted to permit no other-planar travel through them, and are thus detectable as magical. The pit is also magical. Characters approaching it will see that it is full of a swirling whirlpool of reddish gray mist. No sight can penetrate the mist, magical or otherwise. There is no other magic in the room (except, of course, that brought by the PCs).

The box-cells are easily opened by using a nak-cutter, but no other means will succeed. The prisoners are described hereafter.

Special Note: once the PCs have had a chance to talk with Digger (preferably about 2-3 turns after the room is entered), the pit becomes active (see **The Jailor**).

4a. Cells 1-7

Each of these contains a Chak prisoner, of Neutral Alignment. Whenever one of these cells is opened, use the description below.

> You are looking down into a nak-metal box. At the bottom, sitting on the floor looking up at you, is a Chak. It immediately starts jumping up and down (a foot at most) and cries out, in human Common, "Gee whiz! Gee whiz! Have you come to save me? I am the Princess Keelee! Has my father, Sarkum the Great, sent you?"

All seven of these female Chak will thus claim to be the princess. They all believe it, too; they have been magically *charmed*, and then psionically hypnotized. The real princess is one of the seven (determine at random), and she, too, has been *charmed* (but not hypnotized). All the Chak prisoners are friendly and helpful.

A *detect lie* spell will be of little use, as the subjects all believe the story they are telling to be true. All the Chak prisoners detect as *charmed*. *Dispel magic* will remove a *charm* automatically (or several, if many are in the area of effect), but will not affect the psionic hypnosis.

When any false princess is taken outside the jail room without first removing the *charm*, she will attack her rescuers (part of the hypnosis) by biting. The false ones are actually with the Black Chak, not King Sarkum's group (despite their alignment). (They are "camp followers;" decorum prohibits further elaboration.) However, if the *charm* is removed, they will be slightly more clear-headed and will be able to resist the hypnosis enough to hold back. Physical attacking is slightly contrary to their habits. They will, however, inform the PCs that they "feel a strange compulsion to attack! Gee whiz!"

Any Chak prisoner may be talked into "sniffing" the others. While insisting that she is the Princess Keelee, the Chak will comply, and should eventually find the true princess by smell ("Gee whiz! She smells like a princess, too!").

The players may have deduced some other means of success; judge as you see fit. The PCs may end up taking everyone from the jail anyway, as a general rescue mission, and this should succeed admirably if the *charms* are removed before departing.

4b. Cell 10

The PCs' old friend Digger is imprisoned here. He will be overjoyed at the prospect of rescue, promising anything to achieve this result. His actual motives are evil (see **Notes About Digger and Montana**). Digger will warn the party about the Great Dragon in the area.

> "It's like a hydra, but definitely draconian. It has many heads, all of different colors. The Chak here say that it started visiting after they bought a big spider-machine from a demon with two heads. That demon made a *gate*, somewhere around here, so the dragon could visit."

All of the above statements are true.

4c. Cells 11 & 13

Each of these cells contains a glommer (four-armed ape), being punished for some reason. The glommer will try to attack immediately. It can leap the 10′ height of the cube, and if PCs have made an opening 2′ across or larger, it will escape and attack.

Glommer: AL NE; MV 12″@18″; HD 6; hp 30; AC 5; THAC0 13; #AT 4 claws; Dmg 1d4 each; SZ Med; IN Ani; STs 16, STw 15; STR 22.

Special Attacks: 4 claw hits = automatic rending for 2d10 extra points of damage; 3 claw hits = 1d12 points; 2 claw hits = 1d8 points.

4d. Cells 12 & 14

Each of these cells contains a peaceful glommer (same statistics as above). Each radiates magic (a *charm*). Each has been carefully coached to say, when the cage is opened, "Gee whiz! I am da Princess Keelee! I've been changed! Save me — I am cursed!" They can say nothing more. If allowed out of their cages, they will remain peaceful until taken from the jail, but will attack at that time. Any glommer damaged to less than 10 hp will try to flee back into the Black Chak lair.

5. The Jailor

WARNING: THIS IS THE FINAL ENCOUNTER OF THE MISSION, AND IT IS VERY COMPLEX. READ IT ENTIRELY BEFORE STARTING.

The pit in the north end of the jail is an entry into the home of Henkus, an average-sized, very old blue dragon. He is originally from Earth, but came here (via an obelisk) and found a peaceful life with the Black Chak, away from the terrible humans of terra firma.

The mist in the pit is a natural effect with a *stinking cloud* added, at the moment, by Henkus. The pit leads down at a 45-degree angle and is not nak-lined, so Henkus can climb up it easily, at 8″ movement rate.

To wipe out the party and get their valuables, Henkus and Digger have planned the following situation. Henkus has suggested an ambush for Digger's former friends. Digger will get things ready by telling the PCs about a multi-headed dragon (Tiamat), and Henkus will follow up with an illusion of her. Note that Digger's statements are true, but carefully worded. Demogorgon has indeed been here, to sell the retriever to the Chak, but he has not returned, nor has an actual *gate* been created — though it sure looks like one and is detectable as magical. Digger will cooperate with the party until they are slain by Henkus, or until a backstab would come in handy during melee.

Henkus casts a *phantasmal force* after hearing Digger telling the PCs about Tiamat. Time this event to occur preferably before the PCs have finished opening and examining the jail cells, but in any case after they have spoken with Digger. Be sure you know the approximate positions of all the PCs before starting.

> There is a noise from the pit. Suddenly, five dragon heads start to rise from within the mist — white, black, red, green, and blue. It is the creature Digger described. The heads stop within 10′ of the floor; the necks reach down into the mist. The five pairs of eyes are watching you closely.
>
> All the prisoners you have released dive back into their boxes, if possible, or run to a far corner and quiver, exclaiming, "Gee whiz!"
>
> Digger has visibly paled and is quivering, whispering, "oh, no . . . ." He suddenly makes a break for it, running, leaping for the western tunnels. The white head turns and sends a shimmering cone of frost at him, and he falls, frozen, as the ice covers him and a 20′ wide area around him. The distraction has not caused the other four pairs of eyes even to blink; they watch you still.
>
> What do you want to do?

This is a *phantasmal force* cast and controlled by Henkus, who is the blue dragon head within the illusion. Thus, the blue dragon head will do the talking for "Tiamat." If the characters talk to her, "Tiamat" will demand that they leave the spider-prisoners and apes here, and leave immediately. "She" also demands one magic item as payment for the PC intrusion into her jail. "She" will attack if not obeyed. "Tiamat's" speech seems to be a bit slow today — Henkus must be very careful not to break his concentration from the illusion.

Disbelief

Do NOT outline the available options to the players, but be aware of the three possible modes of action available to each PC, and their results:

a. The PC believes the illusion completely. All damage is treated as real, but saving throws may be made for ½ damage.

b. The PC disbelieves the illusion completely. All illusory damage has no effect. Real damage from Henkus's lightning breath is full (63 pts); no saving throw applies.

c. The PC disbelieves everything except the blue dragon head, since it does the talking. Illusory damage has no effect, and the normal saving throw may be made against Henkus's lightning breath.

Any PC who disbelieves some or all of "Tiamat" must totally ignore her (or the parts disbelieved). You may roll dice to reassure the players, but announce no change in the illusion, regardless of disbelief.

Any characters checking Digger's body will either slide on the slippery icy area (if they believe that the white dragon head breathed) and find Digger frozen, or will not slip at all and will find Digger still warm, apparently unconscious (if they disbelive).

If the PCs attack anything but the blue head, they are believing some of the illusion (possibly all), and "Tiamat" will counter with breaths and bites. Handle melee as described above (mode a, b, or c). Each head has 16 hp; the body is not a visible target. If all the heads are "slain," the body immediately descends into the mist.

If some PCs disbelieve, while others take action, aim the first illusory breath to catch one believer and one disbeliever. The disbeliever takes absolutely no damage, and this should be a clue to the others.

Tiamat: AL LE; HD 16; hp 16/head; AC 0; THAC0 7; #AT 5 bites or breaths; Dmg See below; SZ L; IN Genius; STs 2, STw 2.

Special Attacks:
White head: 56 point cone-shaped cold breath (7″x2½″ dia); bite 2d8 points.
Black head: 64 point line-shaped acid breath (6″x½″ dia); bite 3d6 points.
Green head: 72 point cloud-shaped gas breath (5″x 4″x 3″ high); bite 2d10 points.
Blue head: Nil (concentrating on the illusion).
Red head: 88 point cone-shaped fire breath (9″x 3″ dia); bite 3d10 points.

5a. If Tiamat Fails . . .

Henkus will drop the illusion and attack himself if the PCs are either disbelieving everything and taking no damage, or if they seem to be believing nothing but the blue head (himself). If everyone is ignoring all of "Tiamat," Henkus will carefully catch as many PCs as possible with his first lightning breath. If everyone seems to be concentrating on him, Henkus will attack with everything he can. Note that, although Henkus can talk slowly while concentrating on the illusion, he cannot breathe or otherwise attack; he must drop the illusion to engage the PCs. He will use his spells, if possible, to his best advantage. The *web* spell, in particular, should be used against spell casters, and when seriously attacked he can cast *invisibility*.

Digger will join in the melee. He will add missile fire at spell casters, or (if few PCs are left) may try for a backstab. If caught, he will surrender and ask for justice back on Earth (where he knows that the Thieves' Guild will help).

Henkus can certainly be subdued, at normal chances of success. He will surrender if reduced to 12 or fewer hp, if he has the chance.

The pit slopes gently downwards about 50′ and opens into a large room with large tunnel exits. His treasure is here: 3,000 platinum pieces, 150 Sarkums, 40 gems (total value 16,000 gp), 20 pieces jewelry (total value 20,000 gp), a *potion of extra-healing*, a *potion of flying*, a *potion of speed*, and 2 lightwands with rings (10 charges each). He will beg for a few platinum, gems, jewelry and Sarkums to keep. He offers a deal: if the PCs ever need a friend on the moon . . .

Blue Dragon (Henkus): AL LE; MV 9″/24″; HD 9; hp 63; AC 2; THAC0 12; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/3-24; SZ L (42′ long); IN Very; STs 8, STw 7.

Special Attacks: lightning bolt breath (100′ × 5′); spells (see below).
Charm Person (C 1s, R 12″)
Comprehend Languages (C 1r, R Touch, DR 45r)
Magic Missile (C 1s, R 15″, 5d4 + 5)
Invisibility (C 2s)
Stinking Cloud (already used)
Web (C 2s, R 4.5″, DR 18T; 8 cu″, 1″ min dimenson)
Phantasmal Force (already used)

Digger: AL N(E); MV 9″; Ftr/Thf 5/8; hp 40; AC 1 (AC without shield = 4, AC rear = 7); THAC0 16 (19 as Th); #AT 1 dagger or 2 arrows; Dmg by weapon (plus adjustments, see below); SZ S (3′4″); IN Ave (8); STs 13, STw 12.

Special Abilities: Modify attacks for STR 17 (+1/+1), DEX 17 (+2 to missiles), dagger +2, shortbow +2, 8 arrows +1; backstab for triple damage; MS 72%, HS 59%, CW 81%.

5b. The Rescue (Again)

After the melee, the player characters can easily re-rescue all the prisoners they wish. No Black Chak will bother them, unless they spend more than 12 hours in the jail or in the retriever room. If they rest for that long in this area, a squad of 6 Black Chak, all armed with lightwands, will sneak up and attack, gaining a +1 bonus to surprise.

Chak: AL NE; MV 9*21; HD 5; AC 5; THAC0 15; #AT 2 shots or 1 bite; Dmg 2d8/2d8 or 1d6 + poison; SZ L; IN Ave; STs 14, STw 13.

Special Attacks: Poisonous bite; lightwands (use AC 10 for all targets, modified by magic and dexterity only).

6. Return

Surprise! No events or encounters occur on the trip back. If the PCs bring the princess back alive (whether or not they can identify her), they gain the good will of King Sarkum, the trade agreement (and the percentage of the trade revenue thereby), and the 25 Sarkum reward (per survivor) for the rescue. The party gets a bonus of 5 Sarkums for each additional live Chak rescued. Even glommers are worth 1 Sarkum each. The PCs may return home at any time, where they will be welcomed, cheered, beset by pleas, praised, and eventually forgotten.

If the PCs fail to return with the princess, or if they bring back her body (*raise dead* attempts will fail), they get a "Gee whiz! Thanks for trying, anyway!", must return the two loaned lightwands, and are sent home. The obelisk is then turned off remotely, from here, and it remains still and quiet until, a few years later, Sarkum has a problem and wants to see those valiant adventurers who were there last time . . . .

Here Ends the Saga of Needle

Monster Descriptions

CHAK

(new monster)

This is a race of intelligent beings closely related to phase spiders (*Monster Manual*, pg. 90). They are the dominant creatures in this adventure. The Chak have prospered as merchants, trading among many of the races of the Inner Planes of Existence. Their society is large and advanced. Planets are ruled by local kings, who serve an emperor, who rules from the race's home planet somewhere in the Prime Plane. Individual Chak may be of any alignment, but align-

ments within a group usually match (at least along Good-Evil lines). The average Chak lives over 1,000 years. All Chak speak a common language of the same name, and many have learned to speak human Common and several other tongues through their dealings with other races. Their speech patterns usually mimic those of individuals met, so they do develop some odd colloquial expressions, and these habits are hard to break. (The phrase "gee whiz" came into the Chak vocabulary from contact with a paladin some 800 years past.)

Noble Chak are 1-4 Hit Dice larger than the average, with a corresponding damage bonus (1-4), and are AC 3. Kings are 10 Hit Dice at least, bite damage 2d10, and AC 0.

The most common weapon used is the lightwand, a seemingly innocent light-producing device which, when fitted with a special ring, can be shot as a laser (range 120', #AT 2/round, Dmg 2d8, save vs. wands for ½ damage; target treated as AC 10 modified for magic or dexterity only). Other small weapons (such as daggers or hand axes) can also be used. In their lair, over 40% of the Chak encountered will be armed with lightwands.

Chak spin webs, but webs are normally found only in their residences, not throughout a Chak community. A webbed victim of 18 or greater strength can break free in 1 round, STR 17 = 2r, STR 16 = 3r, etc. Though Chak can "phase out" as normal phase spiders, entering the Ethereal Plane at will and returning when desired, they consider it very impolite to do so. Besides, the Ether is cold and possibly dangerous, so it is normally used only as a route to other Planes, except in emergencies (such as attacks). In addition, items carried do not go ethereal with them.

Chak: AL Any; MV 9*21; HD 5; AC 5 (AC 0 if armored); THAC0 15; #AT 1 weapon or bite; Dmg by weapon or 1d6 + poison; SZ L; IN Ave to High; STs 14, STw 13.
Special Attacks: Poisonous bite; weapons.

CHOMPER
(Modified monster)

This is a smallish variety of purple worm (*Monster Manual*, pg. 80), only 20'-30' long, but otherwise identical. It eats rock, burrowing deep and instinctively avoiding the lethal airless lunar surface. Chompers are slightly more intelligent than purple worms. They were introduced to the moon by the Chak, who trained them to respond to simple commands, and they are the primary means of creating new tunnel systems. Tame chompers are virtually harmless, never biting creatures except by accident. Wild chompers exist, however, and are not averse to adding a bit of meat to their diet. A chomper's tail stinger is poisonous, but only causes paralysis. The bite can only swallow creatures of halfling size or less.

Chomper: AL N; MV 9"; HD 9; AC 5; THAC0 12; #AT 1 bite/1 tail stinger; Dmg 2d8/1d4 + poison (paralysis); SZ L; IN Animal; STs 14, STw 13.
Special Attacks: Tail sting (save vs. poison or suffer paralysis for 2-12 turns).

GALEB DUHR
(Monster Manual 2, *page 68)*

These odd rock-beings are reclusive, but very much at home on the moon, both in the air-filled tunnels and on the airless surface. A galeb duhr looks like a large bipedal rock, with a mouth and squinty eyes. They normally avoid or ignore the Chak, but are sometimes hired as guards or spies. Details of their society (if any) are unknown.

A galeb duhr can cast any of the following spells at will, to a maximum of one spell per round:

Passwall (C 5s, R 3", DR 26T, 5'x 8'x 10' deep)
Stone Shape (C 1r, R Touch, DR Permanent, 20 cuf)
Transmute Rock to Mud (C 5s, R 20", DR 1d6 days per 10'cu, Volume 40,000 cuf)
Wall of Stone (C 5s, R 10", DR Permanent, Area 5' thick, 400 sqf)
Move Earth (C 1T/40'sq, R 20", DR Permanent; affects clay, loam, and sand, but not rock)

A galeb duhr can also animate and control up to 2 boulders within 6" range, in much the same way as a treant can affect normal trees.

Adapted to lunar life, these creatures are not as susceptible to cold as are their cousins; no penalty applies to their saving throw against cold-based attacks, but damage is still doubled (save for normal). They are resistant to magical fire, gaining a +4 bonus to saving throws, and are immune to normal fire and all lightning. The boulders they animate share the same resistances and immunities.

Animated boulder: AL N; MV 3"; HD 9; AC 0; THAC0 12; AT 1 crush; Dmg 4d6; SZ L; IN Non; STs 16, STw 15.
Galeb Duhr: AL N; MV 6"; HD 8 to 10; AC -2; THAC0 12 or 10; #AT 1 bite; Dmg 2d8, 3d6, or 4d6; SZ L (8'-12'); IN Very; STs 10, STw 9.

GLOMMER
(Adapted Monster)

This is a four-armed carnivorous ape (*Monster Manual*, pg. 7). It originated in Earth's jungles, and was brought to the moon by evil Chak. Using all four arms, a glommer's strength is effectively 22 (carry 1,000 lb. weight, open doors 11 in 12, *wizard locks* 4 in 12, and Bend Bars/Lift Gates 80%).

Glommers normally use no weapons, but may be taught to use clubs or throw rocks (but not other weapons). With either weapon, no penalties "to hit" or to damage apply for multiple attacks. Club damage is standard (1d6/1d3), and small rocks may be thrown to 3"/6"/9" ranges, for Dmg 1-4 each. If all four of an unarmed glommer's claw attacks hit a single opponent, an extra 2-20 points of rending damage are automatically inflicted. If three claws hit, rending damage is 1-12. If only two hit, rending damage is 1-8.

Glommer: AL NE; MV 12"@18"; HD 6; AC 5; THAC0 13; #AT 4 claws or weapons; Dmg 1d4 (x4) or by weapon; SZ Med; IN Ani; STs 16, STw 15.

ROC
(Monster Manual, *page 82)*

The lunar variety of this species was created by some mad wizard. It needs no air and flies magically, using its wings only for stability. It is immune to all gases and feeds (and/or is cured by) light and heat, absorbed through its wings. Moon rocs are otherwise very similar to their terrestrial cousins.

Moon Roc: AL N; MV 3"/24"; HD 18; AC 4; THAC0 7; #AT 2 claws or 1 beak; Dmg 3d6/3d6 or 4d6; SZ L (70' wingspread); IN Ani; STs 11, STw 10.

TIN MAN
(New Monster)

This is a tin golem, found during tournament round #2. Long ago, the Chak bought it from another race and sold it to the Grippli. If the characters bring it along, they may learn how to activate and control it by talking with the Chak advisors, and it may prove useful.

Once activated, the Tin Man will always speak when spoken to, but has no brains, and will offer a random comment or answer to any question. It is immune to most spells, but water- or ice-based attacks (normal or magical) cause it to become stiff and immobile in 1-4 rounds. (Thorough oiling will free it.) It can be affected by normal or magical weapons. When reduced to 0 hp or less, it is not destroyed, but merely immobilized. It can only be destroyed by melting it (red dragon breath or hotter). It can be activated or deactivated by command words.

The Tin Man is immune to damage from lightwands; its shiny surface reflects the shots. If the shot hits, however, it is reflected in a random direction (roll 1d6):

Die Roll (1d6)	Direction	Die Roll (1d6)	Direction
1	90 degrees left	4	45 degrees right
2	45 degrees left	5	90 degrees right
3	Back at attacker	6	Straight up

A target in the path of the reflection must make a saving throw vs. wands or take 1-8 points of damage.

Tin Man: AL LG; MV 9"; HD 6; hp 27; AC 6; THAC0 13; #AT 1 axe or fist; Dmg 1-8 or 1-4; SZ M (6'); IN Non.

Trade Goods and Values

The "Sarkum" (Chak monetary unit) is used as the base for determining values of both Chak and Earth trade goods. Chak trade

goods are offered at a fixed rate; the rates offered for Earth goods vary with the king's reaction to the party.

Chak Trade Goods

The Chak offer only two trade items — nak metal (and cutter tools) and lightwands.

Nak

Nak cannot be worked except with a special tool, and cannot be damaged except by that tool, or magic, or extremely high temperatures. It reflects lightwand beams (see below) and is suitable for strong enchantment.

Note: Although nak is indeed the metal used to make the coins known as Sarkums, the cutter tool is not suitable for making counterfeit coins. Another device, secret and never mentioned here, is the key. Any and all attempts at making counterfeit Sarkums from nak, short of a *wish*, will fail.

Nak: 1 Sarkum per square foot.

Cutter Tool: 10 Sarkums.

Lightwands

A lightwand produces soft light to a 30′ radius when struck against a hard object. This effect lasts for 1 turn per strike. The wand can be used as often as desired, and uses no charges. The average wand lasts for a year or two before burning out.

Lightwand: 2 Sarkums.

A lightwand can also be fitted with a special ring, about 2″ across. This ring focuses and amplifies the light, creating a damaging beam when the ring is slid along the wand. The maximum rate of fire is 2 per round. The ray has a range of 120′ and can inflict 2-16 (2d8) points of damage to a target creature with a successful "to hit" roll. Any target is treated as AC 10, modified only for magic and dexterity bonuses.

Note: *Bracers* are counted for full value. The victim may make a saving throw vs. wands to take ½ damage. There are no class restrictions, but weapon proficiency applies. Fog or other obscurement cuts the range to 10′ or less. The rings use 1 charge per shot (whether hit or miss), and have 20 charges when new.

Ring: 20 Sarkums each (fully-charged).

Calculating Trade Value of Earth Goods

The Chak will purchase most magic items and giant insects (food) at a price based upon the Experience Point Value (XPV) of the specific piece, modified by the Reaction Score. (See below for calculations.) Good dragons will be purchased at a flat rate of one Sarkum per hit point. The Chak will make no offer whatsoever on evil dragons, and will offer a price based upon only 10% XPV (base) for scrolls, magic armor and magic weapons.

Reaction Modifiers to Trade Value of Items

The values of trade goods vary by the king's reactions to the characters. Calculate trade value as follows:

BASE reaction score	50
If PCs were NOT imprisoned	+ 15
Giving Ackack any gift	+ 10
3 or more PCs lie prone before Sarkum	+ 5
Giving Sarkum a gift (apply ONE only):	
normal item, value 500 gp or more	+ 5
OR a magic item	+ 10
Insulting Ackack or Sarkum	-10
All PCs refuse to lie prone	- 5

Finally, modify the total for the Charisma of the PC speaking for the party, using the Reaction Adjustment (if any).

Note: The PCs carry nothing if they are imprisoned, but may gain this bonus by offering an item owned. If anything is offered in this manner, ALL the party possessions are brought to the king's chamber and returned to the PCs.

Examples

Best: Party does not attack and is not imprisoned (+ 15), gives a gem to Ackack (+ 10), a potion to the king (+ 10), and elects Ghost or Finder (CHA 14, for + 10 bonus) to speak for them; most of the party lays prone when introduced to the king (+ 5), and everyone is relatively polite; total is 100.

Worst: Party attacks and is imprisoned, gives no gifts to anyone, calls Ackack a creepy spider (-10), all refuse to lie prone before Sarkum (-5), and elect Blondy, Slim, or Blaze (no adjustment) to speak for them; total is 35.

Note: Finder should want to speak for the party, using his revealed Charisma, as described earlier.

Determining Item Values

Apply the following values for trade goods, based on Sarkum's total reaction score. These values are not negotiable, but may be modified if proper actions are taken (offering gifts, etc.) during negotiations. Each bonus or penalty to reaction applies once only. When the final total is reached, circle or note which line to use for future reference.

TRADE RATIO CHART
(Item's XP value per Sarkum)

Total Reaction Score (RS)	Trade Ratio (TR)
35-40	450
45-50	400
55-60	350
65-70	300
75-80	250
85-90	200
95	150
100	100

Using the Trade Ratio

For determining the price offered for a magic item, first find its XP value. The Trade Ratio (TR, the number found on the chart) is the number of XP worth 1 Sarkum. Divide the Item's XP value by the Trade Ratio, and round off the result to the nearest tenth.

Examples

Item RS =	60	70	80	90	100
Potion of Healing (XPV 200)	.6	.7	.8	1	2
Potion of Water Breathing (XPV 400)	1.1	1.3	1.6	2	4
Ring of Invisibility (XPV 1500)	4.3	5	6	7.5	15
**Staff of Striking* (XPV 6000) (*if fully charged)	17.1	20	24	30	60

Items With Charges

Factor the entire XP value of a charged item in proportion to the charges remaining.

Examples: Slim's *staff of striking* has 9 charges left, of a maximum of 25, or 36%; its XPV for trade is 36% of 6000, or 2160 XP. Blaze's *wand of illumination* has 18 charges left, of a maximum of 100, or 18%; its XPV for trade is 18% of 2000, or 360 XP.

Items with Doses

Certain unusual items normally come with multiple doses. Multiply or divide the XPV given to reflect more or less than the normal number.

Example: A *potion of water breathing* normally has 2 doses. If sold with 1 remaining, the XPV is ½ that given; if sold with 4 doses, the XPV is twice that given.

Giant Insects

Food is purchased at the same rate as magic items, using the Trade Ratio compared to the XP value for the monster. This will not affect this adventure, but should be mentioned as further impetus for trade. Live giant insects have normal value; dead giant insects are only worth 1/10 this value. XPV for some giant insects are:

Insect	XPV
Giant Wasp	320 + 4/hp
Giant Dragonfly	525 + 8/hp
Giant Mantis	1350 + 14/hp

DISPEL CONFUSION

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® Game Questions

ADQ: Just what can a *phantasmal force* imitate? According to the spell description, the area of effect is only 8 square inches + 1 square inch per level. With this restriction, an archmage could only make a pit 3 square feet in area. Shouldn't it be listed as 8″ + 1″/level instead?

ADA: Your first question is so broad that it cannot be answered here. However, note that the "square inch" in this spell description (written at a time when terminology was quite a bit looser) refers to 100 square feet (a 10′ by 10′ area), as you have noted.

ADQ: What is a mind flayer's mind blast? Is it the same as attack A (psionic blast) in the *Players Handbook* and *Dungeon Masters Guide*? If so, does it use up psionic strength points, or is it an innate ability?

ADA: The mind flayer's psionic attack mode is A (psionic blast), not B (as given in *Monster Manual*), and each use costs the standard 20 points of attack strength. Note that the maximum range is 60′ and that the victims may avoid the effect with a special saving throw. (See the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game *Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 78).

ADQ: What happens if a psionic halfling fighter rolls eligibility to learn more than 3 disciplines? A 4th discipline cannot be gained until 7th level — a level which halfling fighters are incapable of attaining. Is the halfling's psionic growth stunted just because he can no longer advance as a fighter?

ADA: Yes. However, if you (as DM) wish to allow it, the next discipline may be gained when the character's XP total indicates that promotion would have occurred (though it does not). This also solves the problem of halflings unable even to reach 5th level.

ADQ: A *silence 15′ radius* spell prevents sounds made within its area of effect from being heard outside. But can those within the *silence* hear noise made outside, or are they effectively deaf?

ADA: The *silence 15′ radius* spell magically dampens all noise within the area. Those affected cannot hear anything, and no sounds made within the volume can be heard by anyone inside of it or otherwise. Note, however, that *clairaudience* will still function normally if its user is within a *silenced* area, as long as the target area is not *silenced*. Similarly, a blind man could see (temporarily) if given a *clairvoyance* potion!

ADQ: The first level of each outer plane can be entered from the astral plane. Presumably, one could go from the first level to other levels of the plane, but how is this done? Just how does one get to the 2nd Hell, the 7th Heaven, or the 314th layer of the Abyss? Do you have to go through all the preceding layers? Are layers astro-geographically adjacent so that one can be entered from another, or is some spell or device required to *teleport* into these planes?

ADA: The layers of each of the grouped outer planes (Seven Heavens through Arcadia) are "planographically adjacent"; tourists must pass them in numerical order to reach the "deepest." But certain powerful local residents of each group have, no doubt, discovered certain "short cuts" for faster passage.

Note also that the tuning forks employed in the cleric's *plane shift* spell bypass all such planography, allowing access directly to any plane. A *gate* spell bestows similar direct access.

Gamma World® Game Questions

GWQ: How long could someone stay underwater while wearing powered armor?

GWA: A character wearing powered armor can stay underwater until the suit's oxygen supply runs out (about 72 hours, less time it has already been in use).

GWQ: Could a character with *mental control* take over a Herp or Kamodo?

GWA: Yes, but it's not easy to take over a Kamodo, with its *mental shield*, *reflection*, and *will force*. Note that the character is limited by the physical statistics of the body he inhabits.

GWQ: How do the *shorter* and *taller* mutations affect movement rates for characters?

GWA: Modify the normal movement rate for the base species by the character's percentage of average height. For example, the average human is 2 meters tall and moves at 18m/Action Turn. A character twice that tall (4 meters), would move twice as fast, or 36m/Action Turn; and a character 1 meter tall would move half as fast, or 9m/Action Turn.

GWQ: What sorts of fighters, bombers, and other military aircraft are available from Ancient military bases, and what are their statistics?

GWA: Aircraft bases would probably hold standard planes, hovercraft, etc. Remember that the game is set in the future, so design somewhat futuristic craft for use there. For guidelines, use the craft given in the rulebook: bubble cars, hover cars, and flit cars. In addition, some bases previously involved with space programs might have shuttle transports preprogrammed to take passengers to an orbiting space station or to the lunar or Martian colonies. Exact statistics will have to be developed according to your specific needs.

GWQ: A player in my campaign has a character with a *dual brain* and *repulsion field*. Can each brain use a separate *repulsion* attack, getting two such attacks per turn?

GWA: No. The character's mental mutations are divided between the two brains rather than shared by both. Therefore, the *repulsion field* is only usable by one brain, while another mental mutation (if the character has more than one) is usable simultaneously by the other.

GWQ: What protection can you set up against higher-level ID cards?

GWA: If you want to make an area inaccessible even to a high-level ID card, simply add another necessary type of identification, such as a password, fingerprint ID, voice control, or retinal scan.

GWQ: The GM Campaign Map in GW 3, *The Cleansing War of Garik Blackhand*, does not tell where the White Feather tribe is or where the Lake Blob scenario takes place.

GWA: Lake Blob is the smaller of the two connected lakes just southeast of Lake Yee'Low on the module campaign map. Since the White Feather Tribe is nomadic, the GM may place them as desired at the start of the scenario.

GAMMA MARS

The Outer Limits of the GAMMA WORLD® Game

by Roger E. Moore

As noted in "Before the Dark Years" (DRAGON® Magazine, issue #88), much of the solar system had been explored and colonized by the time the Social Wars destroyed 23rd-century civilization. The remains of Tycho Center, the former human settlement on the Moon, were developed for adventuring in issues #86 and #87 of DRAGON Magazine. But, the fate of the rest of the solar system still lies cloaked in mystery. What happened to the rest of the colonies? Did any of the inhabitants survive after the Social Wars cut off communications with Earth? If so, how have they adapted to their environments? What kind of societies have evolved? And how can a mutant get there from here?

Below is some general information for referees willing to make a big leap by expanding their GAMMA WORLD game adventures into deep space. Several years ago, Jim Ward and I discussed the possibility of creating a special GAMMA WORLD® module pack for the planet Mars. The project was not approved, but some of the notes were later developed for use in one of the CRIMSON CRYSTAL™ books (*Renegades of Luntar*).

Hopefully, this material will generate some interesting ideas for high-tech scenarios. If it proves popular enough, future articles may offer notes for developing a "Gamma Mars" campaign. With that, here's a new world for your mutant legions to explore. Good luck to them — they'll need it!

Martian History Since the Year 2000

Numerous colonies had been established on Mars before the Social Wars. The first manned landing on the Red Planet took place on the western end of Vallis Marineris, or Mariner Valley, in A.D. 2002. The United States spacecraft *Ares I* and *Ares II* established a permanent settlement there, rotating the crews back to Earth after a 1-3 year stay. Over the next fifty years, the base grew to a population of over 2,000. Several other bases were established by North American, British, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Australian, and Soviet spacecraft. The largest of these were in the volcanic Tharsis region, at Mount Olympus and Mount Arsia.

The Federation of Mars was peacefully established in 2076, when the Martian colonists became angered over the slow shipping of goods and supplies from Earth. The colonies declared themselves independent and established a General Council at Ares Base. The colonists were assisted by the independent space colony *Atlantis*, which had left Earth orbit in 2046.

In 2085, the remains of an ancient alien culture, not native to Mars, were discovered not far from Ares Base. Subsequent exploration revealed that Mars had previously been colonized by a reptilian race from elsewhere in the galaxy (see below), but that colony had been destroyed in an interstellar war. Although survivors of the old reptilian colony were recovered from suspended-animation chambers, they were never able to restore their community to its former size. Humans established numerous bases in the ruins of the previous culture's cities across Mars and on the two Martian satellites, Deimos and Phobos, often rebuilding the old cities completely.

The Martian colonists were engaged in a massive terraforming project at the time of the Social Wars. With the aid of recovered alien technology and the cooperation of the reptilian race, the colonists transported enormous masses of ice from other locations in the solar system to Mars, to alter the atmosphere and warm the climate. Broad areas of Mars were seeded with special plant life that could survive the harsh conditions and still slowly produce the gases necessary to make the air breathable while preventing mass soil erosion.

At the height of the Social Wars, however, a terrorist group sabotaged one of the processed-ice asteroids and caused it to impact Mars at high speed, near the old *Viking II* landing site at Utopia. The subsequent blast produced earthquakes that rocked the planet, and caused a major duststorm that isolated all the colonies from one another for eight Earth years (a little over four Martian years).

Since that time, the colonies that survived the blast have developed into independent city-states, each with its own laws, government, and ways of life. Contact between the city-states has been sparse for a number of reasons, one of which is the fierce competition for resources. In addition, the colonies have split along many political and religious lines, and the presence of mutants has been a touchy factor. On Mars today (in A.D. 2450), the city-states play the same role that the Cryptic Alliances do on Earth.

Mars Data

Mars is a small, desert world, orbiting about one and a half times as far from the Sun as the Earth does. Any standard astronomy textbook has some basic information on Mars, but additional game data relevant to running a GAMMA WORLD game campaign on the Red Planet will be given here.

At the time of the Social Wars, a terraforming project was underway on Mars. To increase the atmospheric pressure, the colonists mined ice and snow from the asteroid belt, passing comets, and the moons of Jupiter and Saturn, then spread the frozen H_20 on the planet's surface. Not only did it increase the air pressure as it slowly sublimated into the atmosphere, but it also created weather patterns and small ice pockets which resulted in the formation of several small seas — one in the Hellas basin in the southern hemisphere and several around the Boreal Plain, which encircles the North Polar Cap. An assortment of lakes appeared in various craters across the planet, few of them larger than a hundred kilometers across. Nearly all of the lakes and seas remain frozen over during the Martian year, melting only for short periods during summer days in areas near the equator.

The Martian air is not breathable by humans, though it has become thick enough for colonists to discard their pressure suits. A face respirator with air tanks to supply the necessary oxygen is usually sufficient for breathing outdoors. However, due to the incomplete terraforming, the air is still quite cold. Surface temperatures average -100°C at night, and -10°C during the day, reaching a high of 25°C in the summer. Therefore, insulating garments such as heavy coats, boots, and gloves must be worn outdoors throughout most of the year.

Martian gravity is only .38 times that of Earth (less than ½), so a character can carry about 2.6 times as much weight on Mars as he can on Earth. Maximum walking and running speeds only increase by half again, however, as characters accustomed to Earth gravity may lose their balance if they move too quickly on Mars. Maximum vehicle speeds are not affected.

The Martian day is 24 hours, 37 minutes, 22.7 seconds long (in Earth standard time units). Only someone with an extremely accurate time sense will notice the difference between a Martian day and an Earth day. (Note however that when it is night at the Martian end of the Hermes transmitter (see below), it might be daytime at the Earth terminal.)

The Martian year is 686.98 Earth days long, or 668.6 Martian days long. Each city-state has its own calendar system, and many have different zero-year dates, holidays, and so forth. Mars has the same sorts

of seasons that Earth does, though the only apparent difference between them is the change in temperature.

Life on Mars

Numerous types of intelligent life exist on Mars, scattered across its surface in city-states, independent colonies, or even remote lairs.

Humans

The most prevalent life form on Mars is humanity, which exists in both Pure Strain and mutant forms. (Although Mars was not a primary target for radiation and dimension-warp warheads during the Social Wars, the few that did detonate there caused several nuclear accidents which contributed to the appearance of a small but stable mutant population in later years.) Pure Strain Humans outnumber the mutants by about 4 to 1, and the total human population on Mars is about 5 million.

Animals

Among the many species of animals brought to Mars by human colonists were some experimental types genetically engineered ("geneered") for high intelligence to be used as servants or co-workers. Chimpanzees, gorillas, dogs, and (fertile) mules (fitted with specially designed respirators) were introduced, along with numerous other less intelligent species. Several mutant animal species developed in the aftermath of the Social Wars. Some of these continued to help humanity; other turned wild and escaped into the vast deserts.

Luntarians

When the first human colonists landed on Mars, they discovered the remains of an ancient alien civilization on the planet. The alien beings, known as Luntarians, had come from an interstellar civilization in another part of the galaxy. Following a civil war in their home empire, a number of renegade Luntarians fled to Mars and continued their fight against the empire's forces from afar. About 22,000 years ago (Earth time), the empire attacked the colony and destroyed all of the major rebel bases on the Red Planet.

The few live Luntarians that were rescued from suspended-animation chambers in one of the damaged renegade bases chose to remain on Mars and rebuild their old colony with the help of human technology. The Martian Luntarians managed to survive the Social Wars without serious loss, and about 10,000 of them exist on the Red Planet today. Mutant Luntarians are extremely rare, and those that do exist are regarded with distaste by others of their race.

The typical Luntarian appears to be a 2-meter-tall lizard-like humanoid, with six fingers on each hand and numerous sharp teeth in its short, broad snout. Normal Luntarians have rich maroon scales; mutants are frequently speckled with lighter or darker blotches, or may even be albino. Their eyes are catlike and have golden irises. Luntarians have life spans of up to 38 Martian years. Although they prefer meat to other foods, they are fully omnivorous.

Because of their long exposure to human culture, Luntarians think and act much like human beings, though they tend to be more aggressive and do not seem to suffer as much guilt. Their social systems are roughly patterned after those of the various human societies on Mars.

Male and female Luntarians are equal in size and power, but both sexes undergo frequent, prolonged neuter stages. The neuter stage lasts for 40-45 Martian days, then the Luntarian assumes its proper sex again for 2-3 days. During this time, it may find a mate and start a family if desired.

Female Luntarians bear their children live (1-2 at a time) after a gestation period of .3 Martian years. Most of the young are now raised by professional communal-care facilities in Luntarian communities.

Currently, most Martian Luntarians are living at the Ares Base, Mount Olympus, and South Cap Delta city-states. They tend to segregate themselves from the human population, though rarely to the extreme. At least one or two small, wholly Luntarian city-states exist, but the locations of these are unknown.

Though they are six-fingered, Luntarians may use most equipment built for humans with little effort. Most equipment on Mars is designed for easy use by either race.

Much information on the old Luntarian Star Empire has been lost over the years, and the empire is assumed to have fallen apart millenia ago. Two human-crewed starships were sent to the reported location of the Luntarian empire, but neither ship ever returned.

Other Aliens

No other intelligent alien life forms were known to exist on Mars prior to the Social Wars, though a few alien plants and animals were brought to the Red Planet from other star systems and placed within zoological exhibits at Mount Olympus and at Ares Base, near Mariner Valley. Whether any of these life forms were actually intelligent beings in disguise is uncertain. Some of these life forms mutated during the Social Wars and gained intelligence, but these cases were extremely rare.

Native Martians

The theory that Mars itself may have given birth to a native race of intelligent life has never been proven, though bizarre tales of strange cities hidden in underground caverns continue to circulate. Much of the planet's surface is still unexplored today, and what may lie in remote areas or beneath the surface remains a mystery. The ancient tales portray the legendary native races sometimes as monstrous and hostile to all surface dwellers, sometimes as beautiful and kind, and sometimes as some other combination. There is no evidence to support any of these notions as of yet.

Constructs

Intelligent robots, think tanks, PCIs, androids, and cyborgs may be found in most city-states, and often in isolated areas where they were in use when the Social Wars occurred. Such individuals may be valuable sources of information about decimated areas, or they might be deranged and hostile. Some might even be developed as player characters by willing referees, although their freedom of action might be limited. Jim Ward has produced some guidelines for robotic PCs, but these have not yet been published.

Martian Player Characters

Martian human, humanoid, and mutated animal player characters may be generated according to the standard GAMMA WORLD Game rules. Luntarian characters are generated as follows. These statistics may be used for both PC and NPC Luntarians.

Statistic	Die Roll
MS	3d4 + 2
IN	4d6*
DX	2d6 + 1
CH	3d6
CN	4d6**
PS	2d6 + 9

**Roll all four, but drop the lowest die score.*
***Use 8-sided die to determine hit points. (Mutant Luntarians use 6-sided dice for hit points. The maximum possible score for constitution is 18.)*

Luntarians obviously do not react to situations as quickly as humans do, and they are not as accurate when firing weapons. However, they are quite intelligent, strong, and healthy.

Luntarians have a base armor class of 7. Their scales are small and soft, almost like human skin in texture, though there are tough muscles below the skin.

The movement rate for Luntarians is 12/900/18. NPCs will have 12d8 hit dice and a morale level of 1d6 + 4. Luntarians have no claw attacks, preferring to use weapons instead, but they can bite for 1d6 hp damage when engaged in close melee combat.

Importing PCs From Earth

Though high-speed spacecraft served as the most important link between Earth and the Red Planet, research was just being finished on a top-secret project known as *Hermes* when the Social Wars occurred. The Hermes Project researchers had developed a fast and effective means of interplanetary matter transmission, and had built test transmitters on Earth and Mars. The range of each transmitter was limited to something less than a hundred million kilometers, but that was close enough to reach the Martian colonies whenever Earth and Mars were on the same side of the sun. (This event, known as opposition, occurs every twenty-five or twenty-six months.) A "window" for transmission is available for two months during opposition, and materials and passengers could be instantly and safely shipped between worlds as fast as they could be carried into the transmitter chambers.

Before the project could be made public, the Social Wars intervened and the entrance to the project headquarters disappeared, buried in the Rocky Mountains of southern British Columbia. Few traces of the project remained, but if anyone were to discover its location and figure out how to reactivate the transmitter, it could open up the frontiers of a second world, the likes of which can scarcely be imagined.

UNOFFICIAL NEW ILLUSIONIST SPELLS

by Jon Pickens

Many of the magic items listed in the Dungeon Masters Guide *have effects that cannot be duplicated by existing spells in the AD&D® Game system. So how can such items be recharged? This is the fourth installment in a series of new spells which have been suggested as a solution to this campaign dilemma. (You'll find a few useful "extras" here as well.) The first three installments of this series, dealing with clerical and magic-user spells, may be found in issues #22, #24, and #25.*

Dancing Shadows (Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: *2*
Range: *3″*
Duration: *1 round/level*
Area of Effect: *3″ cube*
Components: *V,S*
Casting Time: *2 segments*
Saving Throw: *Neg.*

Explanation/Description: This spell creates flickering lights and shadows which move and "dance" within a 3″ cube. All creatures within this area must save vs. spells or be disoriented (treat as if blinded) while within the area of effect, and for two rounds after leaving it. Creatures without eyes, and those which are not sensitive to the visible light spectrum, are immune to the effects of this spell. Thieves who have successfully saved may hide in the *dancing shadows* with a bonus of +50% to their hide in shadows ability (to a maximum of 99%).

Mimicry (Illusion/Phantasm)
cf. Mongrelman

Level: *2*
Range: *6″ + 1″/level*
Duration: *3 rounds/level*
Area of Effect: *Hearing range*
Components: *V,S*
Casting Time: *2 segments*
Saving Throw: *Special*

Explanation/Description: This spell allows the caster to mimic the sounds made by any known animal or monster, with the exception of any special sound-based attacks. Characters who disbelieve the sound may make a saving throw vs. spells; if successful, they will hear only a faint noise.

Create Darkness (Alteration)
cf. Dark Creeper

Level: *3*
Range: *4″ + 1″/level*
Duration: *Special*
Area of Effect: *5″ diameter sphere*
Components: *V,S*
Casting Time: *3 segments*
Saving Throw: *Special*

Explanation/Description: This spell instantly extinguishes all non-magical sources of illumination within the area of effect at the time it is cast. Magical light sources must save vs. frost or be extinguished as well. Light sources extinguished by this spell cannot be relit for one hour unless the *darkness* is *dispelled*, although magical light sources will return to normal automatically once the *darkness* is no longer in effect. The infravision of creatures in the area is not affected. Note that this spell does not prevent the preparation or the use of new sources of illumination while it is in effect.

Shadow Blink (Alteration)

Level: *3*
Range: *0*
Duration: *1 round/level*
Area of Effect: *Personal*
Components: *V,S*
Casting Time: *3 segments*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell is a limited form of *teleportation* which enables the caster, along with up to 2,500 gp weight of gear, to instantly "blink" from shadow to shadow, up to a maximum distance of 6″, with no error. The destination must have sufficient shadow cover to permit a thief to hide in shadows. The caster always arrives at exactly the shadowed spot desired, either by simply visualizing the area or by stating direction. If the desired destination is wholly or partially occupied by a solid object, the caster is trapped on the Shadow Plane until a means of return can be found. If no shadow exists at the intended destination, the attempted *blink* fails and is wasted. The caster may *shadow blink* once for every 3 levels of experience; that is, a 5th or 6th level illusionist may *shadow blink* up to two times within the spell duration, a 7th, 8th, or 9th level illusionist up to three times, and so forth. Recovery from each blink requires 7 segments.

Shadow Cloak (Alteration)

Level: *3*
Range: *0*
Duration: *1 turn/level*
Area of Effect: *Personal*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *3 segments*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell creates a shadowy, insubstantial mantle around the caster. This *shadow cloak* enables the caster to become effectively invisible upon stepping into an area of shadows large enough to permit a thief to hide in shadows. The illusionist reappears when making an attack, but can fade back into the shadows if undisturbed for one round. The *cloak* is automatically *dispelled* by natural sunlight or by light equal in intensity to a *sunburst*. The material component is a square of black silk.

Sunburst (Evocation)
cf. Wand of Illumination

Level: *3*
Range: *12″*
Duration: *1/10 sec*
Area of Effect: *4″ diameter globe*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *3 segments*
Saving Throw: *Special*

Explanation/Description: Creates a brilliant flash of greenish white light with blazing golden rays. Undead within the area of effect take 6-36 (6d6) points of damage (no saving throw); all other creatures within or facing the burst must save vs. spells or be blinded for 2-12 segments. Creatures without eyes, and those which are not sensitive to the visible light spectrum, are immune to the effects of this spell. A *sunburst* negates any *darkness* spells from casters of equal or lower level. The material component is a sunflower seed.

Illusory Wall (Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: *4*
Range: *3″*
Duration: *Permanent*
Area of Effect: *1′ × 10′ × 10′ volume*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *4 segments*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell creates the illusion of a wall, floor, ceiling, or similar surface. The illusion is permanent until *dispelled*. It will always appear real when viewed, but physical objects can pass through it without difficulty. When used to conceal pits, traps, or normal doors, standard demi-human and magical detection abilities work normally, and touch or probing searches will reveal the true nature of the surface, though such will not cause the illusion to disappear. The material component is a rare dust that costs 400 gp and requires 4 days to prepare.

Programmed Glamer (Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: *4*
Range: *1″/level*
Duration: *Special*
Components: *V,S*
Casting Time: *4 segments*
Saving Throw: *Special*

Area of Effect: *4 sq " + 1 sq " /level*

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell, the illusionist causes a volume of sound to arise, at any desired distance within range, upon command or when a specified condition occurs (*cf. magic mouth*). The sound will seem to recede, close, or remain fixed as desired. The volume of sound caused depends upon the experience level of the caster. An 8th level illusionist can produce a volume of sound equivalent to that of 32 men, maximum. Each additional experience level adds the volume of 4 more men, so at 9th level the illusionist can cause sound equal to that of 36 men, maximum, and so forth. Thus, talking, singing, or shouting, and walking, marching, or running sounds can be caused. The auditory illusion created can be virtually any type of sound, but the relative volume must be commensurate with the level of the magic-user casting the spell. A horde of rats running and squeaking is about the same volume as 8 men running and shouting. A roaring lion is equal to the noise volume of no fewer than 24 men. Characters who disbelieve the sound may make a saving throw vs. spells, and will hear only a faint sound if successful. The glamer will last for a maximum of 1 round per level of the caster.

Note that this spell is particularly effective when cast in conjunction with a *programmed illusion*. The material component of the spell is a bit of wool or a small lump of wax.

Seeming (Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: *4*
Range: *10' radius*
Duration: *2-12 rounds + 1 round/level*
Area of Effect: *One creature/level*
Components: *V,S*
Casting Time: *4 segments*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell enables the illusionist to alter the appearance of up to one person (defined as for *charm person* spell) per level of experience, including clothing and equipment, within a 10' radius. The caster may cause the recipients to appear as any generally man-shaped bipedal creature type, each up to 1' shorter or taller than normal height, and either thin or fat, or in between. All those affected resemble the same type of creature: human, orc, ogre, etc.; however, each appears as a recognizable individual. The effect will fail with respect to an individual creature if the illusion decided upon by the caster cannot be accomplished within the above parameters. (For example, a halfling could not be made to appear as a centaur, but might be made to look like a short, young ogre.) Unwilling creatures may make a saving throw vs. spells to avoid the effect. The spell lasts 2-12 turns plus 1 turn per caster level. Affected persons resume their normal appearance if slain.

Read Object (Divination)

Level: *5*
Range: *Touch*
Duration: *1 round*
Area of Effect: *Object touched*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *5 segments*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: By handling an object, the caster can determine the current or previous owner's race, alignment, and possibly his fate. If an item has a legendary history, the caster may (30% chance) have visions of its past. If the device is operated by command words, the caster has a 5% chance per level of determining one of these each time the spell is cast, unless the object is of artifact quality (in which case the DM adjudicates information gained). The material component is an incense of rare aromatics costing no less than 100 gp.

Blending (Alteration/Illusion)
cf. Robe of Blending

Level: *6*
Range: *Touch*
Duration: *5 rounds/level*
Area of Effect: *Creature touched*
Components: *V,S,M*
Casting Time: *5 segments*
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell enables the caster to appear to be part of a rock wall, a plant, a creature of another sort — whatever is appropriate. The coloration, form, and even odor are produced by the spell, although it will not make its caster appear to be more than twice (or less than one-half) normal height, and it does not empower language or noise capabilities — either understanding or imitating. In situations where several different forms are appropriate, the caster must state which form is desired. The caster can change forms at will while the spell is in effect; each such change requires 5 segments. Creatures with exceptional (15 +) or better intelligence have a 1% per intelligence point chance of detecting something amiss when they are within 3" of the affected creature, and those creatures with low intelligence (5 +) or better and 10 or more levels of experience or hit dice have a 1% per level or hit die

chance of likewise noting something unusual about a *blended* creature. (The latter is cumulative with the former chance for detection, so an 18 intelligence magic-user of 12th level has a 30% chance — 18% + 12% — of noting something amiss.) There is one initial check per eligible creature, and successive checks should be made each turn thereafter, if the same creatures are within the 3" range. The material component is a piece of dried chameleon skin.

FLETCHER'S CORNER

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by Michael Przytarski

"Fletcher's Corner" is a regular column that offers sensible tips from an experienced judge who is not affiliated with any game company on how to solve everyday problems in role-playing campaigns. The ideas presented are not official; they are simply advice from one member to others. If you have a problem that you would like to see addressed in this column, send it in to RPGA™ Network HQ, P.O. Box 509, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Thanks to those of you who have suggested topics for the column; you'll see your requests addressed soon. In the meantime, we shall delve into the realm of magic — not spells, everyone uses different spell systems these days, but magic items.

Personally, I feel that the magic used in a campaign should not be limited to what can be built from a single set of spells. Magic-users develop spells for specific purposes, usually in response to a personal need or interest. Spellcasters often specialize in particular areas. (I know of a mage character who specializes in fire. Trolls[1] hate him.) But all characters use magical items, and that's where the problem starts.

Organizing Your Magic

A campaign world is a closed system. Logically, therefore, all the magic items available to characters (excluding artifacts) were made by some PC or NPC from materials available within the world setting. So the supply of any given item must be finite (even if it is plentiful), and each item must have a value commensurate both with its power and with the length of time it takes to create.

If you don't start out with a system for keeping track of magic items in your campaign world, it's easy to end up with an incredible profusion of them. But if you have a logical rationale for the origin, source, price, and availability of various items, it's much easier to control the supply.

Tracking the history of each individual potion is obviously a lot of unnecessary extra work, so I roughly divide magic items into categories for ease of handling. It's not vital that each and every item in the book fit neatly into one category or another, and you may find that a different system of categorization works better for you. But for the sake of example, let's take the items most coveted by players (weapons and protective devices), and break them into categories according to their relative power: mundane, powerful, and deadly.

The Mundane

Mundane items are temporary or one-use-only magical items, such as potions and scrolls of lesser-powered spells. Also included are missiles with low levels of enchantment, such as *arrows +1*[1], and other limited-usage weapons which do not ordinarily inflict severe harm on others. In addition, some non-magical items may fall into this category if they are uncommon and useful. Many items made by specialists are so well crafted that they act as though enchanted. For example, some of the arrows made by elves may fly like magic (equivalent to *arrows +1*, assuming that you can aim them), even though they are not enchanted. Or how about elven bowstrings, dwarven lamps, halfling slings, and goblin spears? All these are made by beings who are experts in the field, and are used extensively by these races, so they should be well-made, effective, and cheap. Items like these should be welcome to characters of any level, even if they have money to burn.

Ideally, mundane items should be the most common ones in a campaign, but they are usually the ones most hated by players. Many players feel that a scroll or potion is worthless unless it has some ultra-powerful effect for combat or protection, and most characters wouldn't even bother to pick up an *arrow +1*, let alone use it. I will be the first to admit that the selection of magic is very limited at this low level of power, and that it's easier to see an immediate use for powerful items. But it shouldn't be that way. This attitude is indicative of a campaign in which heavy emphasis is placed on combat, or one in which the DM makes powerful magic too readily available.

Mundane items are normally readily available on the market, even in smaller towns. They can often be made in "batches," and they are frequently found in the course of adventuring.

The Powerful

Powerful items are those with low-power permanent enchantments, such as *swords +1*[1], enchanted armor, some rings and miscellaneous magic items, and some charged items, such as wands, staves, etc. This classification does NOT include swords with special powers or purposes, charged items with life-or-death abilities, and other devices of extreme power.

Powerful items should be rarer than mundane items, but some may still be offered for sale in large cities, and they should be relatively easy to acquire during adventuring. They are almost never made in "batches;" each must be commissioned individually.

The Deadly

Deadly magical items are those with permanent enchantments of life-or-death power, such as *vorpal swords*[1] (which can possibly cause instant death on a good hit), *rods of resurrection*[1], weapons with extra powers or special abilities, and powerful protective devices such as highly enchanted armor and shields, or even *rings of invisibility*[1], which can enable the user to evade attack. Those items which are designed solely for the purpose of killing or controlling creatures with extreme force should always be considered deadly.

Deadly items should be rare enough that you can keep track of the origin and history of each and every one. The majority of them are probably already owned by powerful NPCs, but some may be found in dangerous places after long quests. (Note that such items are almost never found by low-level characters. If they could be taken that easily, some other adventurer would surely have done so by now.)

The Ridiculous

I know what you're thinking. This category wasn't listed earlier in the column. How can he justify this one after all he's listed so far? Well, it's easy. The ridiculous are those items that should never even have been thought of, let alone used in any game, normal or otherwise. A good example is the *+5 holy avenger*[3] with *life stealing* power. I have seen many strange items, from *arrows of annihilation* (*spheres of annihiliation*[1] attached to arrows) to magical teeth that allow the user to perform as a one-man army.

Suffice it to say that ridiculous items are never found, cannot be made, and cannot exist in any reasonable campaign.

"Homemade" Items

Categorization makes it easier to design "homemade" magic items too. Just decide into which category your new item should fit, balance its level of power with the other items in the category, then round out the details and decide an appropriate origin and history if needed. Set a price if the item is to be available for sale, or specify the time and materials needed if it is to be manufactured. Using existing guidelines for comparison helps ensure that new items won't upset the balance of play.

It also gives you a better idea how many items should be available in each category. Mundane items are not plentiful, but with practice you'll find that you can invent

some really nifty low-power items. After all, anyone can develop a *+5 holy sword*[1] with life stealing powers. (Don't laugh, I had a character once run with a party that had three of them.) It takes far more imagination to come up with a *bowl of never-ending hot oatmeal.* Big deal, right? Have a character in an arctic situation once and you'll see what he'll pay for that *bowl.* And where is he going to find a warm meal on those rainy mornings while he's being hunted, or when he's simply in a hurry? Not only will that *bowl* be welcome in a true game, but it should be reasonably cheap (compared to a *+5 holy sword*) and easy to make.

Pricing Your Items

Novice DMs frequently underprice magic items on the market. Remember, book prices reflect item values relative to one another; each DM must balance sale prices with the economics of the individual campaign.

Market prices of magic items should logically be subject to fluctuations based on campaign inflation (caused by the influx of too much money from adventurers) and on supply and demand. For example, *arrows +1* are frequently elven-made. If this is the case, a campaign with an overabundance of elves should have a similar overabundance of *arrows +1* available, at a fairly reasonable cost. This also holds for more powerful arrows, but those, having been made by older family members with more experience, will cost more, although they will be nearly as easy to get. Likewise, there are bound to be more dwarven swords available than elven ones, and the elven swords will be expensive, since there are fewer elves with skill in forging metal.

Fantastic items, such as rings, brooches, potions, wands, and the like, are an exception to the rule. These items must usually be made by a specialist in a particular field, and the availability of components is a significant factor in determining price. (Components are the metals or other hard materials that form the object, and the spells or other power used to hold the item together and give it its ability.)

Fantastic items other than potions, scrolls, and low-powered weapons are usually made to order for a specific person or purpose. For that reason, the manufacturers of such items usually demand at least half of the fee in advance, if not the full amount. After all, what happens to a mage who spends years on a powerful staff for you, only to find out that you died and no one else wants the thing?

Finally, consider the time it takes to manufacture a magic item. That alone should send the cost of the finished product through the roof. Try using a standard formula to estimate the costs. For labor, figure a base rate of 2 gp per person per day, with a 10% bonus per level of the creator. Add to this the cost of the base materials, research, spell casting and recasting, testing, and inspection, and you've got an expensive item there.

Many have tried to bypass this operation by taking an already manufactured item and casting additional new spells upon it to give it extra powers. It's a nice idea, and cheaper than the manufacture of new items, but logically speaking, it shouldn't work (except for standard recharging). After all, someone powerful enough to make the item in the first place is certainly powerful enough to put some type of protection on it to prevent others from messing with its workings. This protection can vary from causing the new spell not to function at all to causing the entire item to go dead due to an overload.

Even mundane items can take up to a year to make. Consider potions, for example. Some potions require rare and dangerous ingredients, and the smallest mistake can spoil an entire batch. When a mage finally has a good batch, he's not going to let it go for a mere 500 gp.

When setting prices, keep in mind the method that must be used to make the item, materials needed, spells required, and the level of the manufacturer. All those considerations should be reflected later in the availability of the item and the price. And remember that in general, the better the product, the more the maker thinks of retirement. After all, a mage can throw only so many spells of *permanency*[2] before it really costs him — and he wasn't young when he started.

There's one more point that characters should consider before commissioning items of deadly power. Powerful individuals do not usually approve of others playing with serious magic, and may try to prevent you from gaining more power. And assuming that you successfully gain this new item, what are you going to do with it? As soon as others know of it, they will try to take it from you, as you have taken magic from others. The more power you have, the more trouble usually comes with it.

Imported Items

Strange items are not the only things that have been used to the extreme. Some judges allow individual characters to own two or more items of great magic (that is to say, the dreaded artifact). That's all right for DMs who want to deal with it, but what happens when these players have the nerve to pop into someone else's world and demand that their characters and equipment be accepted? If the DM in charge does not review new characters and items closely, such "imports" can cause havoc in the campaign just because the laws of magic are different. Plus, how are the "old" players going to feel if a newcomer is permitted to enter the campaign with a clear advantage over the rest, when they had to work long and hard to advance their own characters?

I suppose a great example of this would be a young man I met in an event at GEN CON® 17 Game Fair. It was a "bring your own high-level character" game, with more than eighteen players. Many of these players had just rolled their characters (a practice I do not like), but several of us provided our own. With so many players involved, it was difficult at first, but the main problem was with one player who wanted his character's minions to come along. It seems that the character in question collected swords, and the minions carried them for him. Now normally this type of problem can be solved by requesting that he take only what he could use. But he was unable to choose, decided that we were out to get him and his friends, and started to attack all our characters. Needless to say, the game was over and many feelings were hurt by the incident. And all of this was because the player had developed his character in a group that worshiped power to the extreme rather than encouraged cooperation. Imagine what this attitude can do to a normal campaign.

So remember, when you are planning a game or world, take into account the magic you are going to use, and decide on the the items that you will allow. Evaluate magic items that players wish to bring into your campaign from others, and simply disallow those that do not fit in with your system of balance. Keep a record of all magic in your world. This will cause more work for you, but it will result in fewer powerful items. And best of all, when your characters find an item, they will appreciate it more and use it more wisely. Not only will this reflect well on you as a judge, it will aid your players in developing their role-playing ability.

A Few of My Favorite Things

Picture a small keep inhabited by a dwarven caretaker. The dwarf in question is a mere level 9/9 fighter/thief[3] with few magical items, but lots of guts. He holds no allegience to any particular faction or religion, yet many high-level characters fear and hate him. Why? Well, since he is the caretaker of the keep, he knows all of the secret doors, passageways, and dark corners. This means that he can suddenly appear behind a party, use his *dwarven thrower*[1] to get the group's attention, then vanish into the walls. Plus, as some already know, he is an expert with marbles. Many a fighter has become intimately acquainted with the floor due to a handful of marbles tossed by a fleeing dwarf.

Of course, while all the invading adventurers are yelling, running, and blasting the area where they last saw the dwarf, they may miss spotting the owner standing in the hall. He has just come home to find a group of someone's immature children trashing his home. Or even better, suppose the dwarf leads the party to his master, who just happens to have been dead for a few centuries and hates to be disturbed. After all, even liches need sleep.

1. From ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *Monster Manual,* © 1978 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
2. From ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *Players Handbook,* © 1978 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
3. From ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *Dungeon Masters Guide,* © 1979 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

The Critical Hit

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by Errol Farstad

Greetings once again, fellow gamers! At the request of Keeley Anderson (Pipersville, Pennsylvania), I will be reviewing the TWILIGHT: 2000™ Game[1] for this issue.

But before we get into that, I'd like to thank Janice Ander (Hanover Park, Illinois), Rob Diehorn (Camp Hill, Pennsylvania), Todd Goluba (Pleasonton, California), Pierre Savoie (Toronto, Ontario), Chris Smith (Wilmington, Massachusetts), and Jon Wisniewski (Oak Ridge, New Jersey) for their title suggestions for this column. My only regret is that there weren't more of these great ideas. I will say now that ALL the suggestions were good, and that it was very hard to determine the best. But I have to say that "The Critical Hit," from Todd Goluba, is my choice for a permanent name, and here's why:

1. "Critical hit" is a universal gaming term, which is not specific to any one game system.
2. It shows that I am an independent reviewer.
3. It gives the impression that I'm going to expose the "guts" of each game reviewed.

Again, thanks to all of you for your suggestions, and I hope you'll keep reading my game reviews.

I have an exciting announcement! West End Games, Inc., finally came out with a GM Screen for the PARANOIA™ Game[2]! Those of you who read last issue's review know that I complained about the extra work it takes to find the tables and charts during play, since they are scattered throughout the three game booklets. The new GM Screen is a real "Computersend" for the system. (Remember, the Computer is in charge in the PARANOIA Game, not deities.) I give it a hearty four-star rating!

As a final note, I had originally intended to use just a numerical scale to rate games. But the boxed stars that appeared with my introductory review article looked like part of the system, so Penny suggested I use them.

The TWILIGHT: 2000 Game

"Good luck. You're on your own."[3] These are the final words that you, as a member of the 5th Division, hear from the Commanding Officer at headquarters in Warsaw. From here on in, it's just a simple matter of survival. You'll have to dodge marauders, nuclear craters, and the surviving units from other countries on top of your regular duties, such as foraging for food, setting up camp, and maintaining your weapons.

The TWILIGHT: 2000 Game (GDW, $18.00) is set in the year 2000, after World War III. You and your comrades are members of the U.S. Army 5th Division (Mechanized), and you're all trying to survive on a day-to-day basis in Poland, where you're pretty much cut off from the rest of the world. It's a different type of role-playing game which combines the elements of modern-day warfare with role-playing, and does a pretty darn good job at it.

Packaging

The title of the game perked my interest, but the artwork on the front of the box is only so-so. The backgrounds are excellent, and the detail on the uniforms, weapons, and vehicles is good, but the faces seem to be out of proportion compared with the bodies to which they are attached, and the soldiers depicted look more like caricatures than representations of people in an army unit.

But inside — ah, fellow members, inside lies a veritable treasure trove! The game is complete, and it comes with — hold onto your dice — a Play Manual, a Referee's Manual, charts for character generation, an equipment list, a price list, an introductory adventure, an adventure handout to acquaint the players with the events leading up to current game time, a briefing sheet that serves as a copy of the final intelligence report issued by the 5th Division, a campaign map of Poland, numerous blank character sheets, and one 10-sided and four 6-sided dice. In addition, there is a sheet describing what should be included with the game, which is a blessing in itself.

Rules and Explanations

The rules are set down in plain language and they are easy to understand. But, like some of the more complex games, it takes a bit longer to learn than the basic role-playing games.

Characters are generated with one 10-sided and four 6-sided dice. Each has eight basic abilities, which in turn are used to determine other skills learned either before or after joining the military.

The dice are also used to determine the results of Fire Combat[4], Body Combat[4], Melee Combat[4], and Skill Success[4]. Skill Success is the easiest to master, requiring only a roll vs. the character's skill level and the GM's decision as to whether the chance of success should be Easy, Average, or Difficult for the action in question. Body Combat and Melee Combat cover the use of knives, spears, bayonets, and self-defense. The character's skill level (1-100) is used as the chance of success for resolving either of these actions. Fire Combat (i.e. the use of firearms) is resolved by using the skill level (with various modifiers applied) and range. So far, so good.

Miscellaneous

Those of you who have read my reviews before know that I usually rant and rave when a game's charts and tables are scattered throughout several books. Well, the TWILIGHT: 2000 Game has no such problems! All the tables are in one booklet. (Cheers and other forms of enthusiasm are appropriate.)

The interior artwork depicts soldiers before, during, or after combat, and it is much better than that on the box cover. Some pictures are highly reminiscent of photos taken during actual modern wars.

However, while the Referee's Charts give the details on the weapons and assign numbers for damage, the tables do not specify what the numbers stand for. The values given in the tables actually represent a variable quantity in a damage equation based on range, but it would be convenient to have the range equations listed with the table as well as in the Combat section of the Play Manual. After all, it's rather perplexing to see a "0" damage rating for a hunting bow.

Overall

The concept is good. The game itself, with the exception of the point noted above, is excellent and can provide many hours of enjoyable role-playing.

Final Rating
The TWILIGHT: 2000™ Game
★ ★ ★

Category	Rating
Packaging	★★★
Rules	★★★★
Miscellaneous	★★★
Degree of Difficulty	2 for players (6 months experience needed) 3 for judges (1 year experience needed).
Overall	★★★

1. TWILIGHT: 2000 is a trademark owned by Game Designers' Workshop.

2. PARANOIA is a trademark owned by West End Games, Inc.

3. From box bottom copy, TWILIGHT: 2000 Game, © 1984 Game Designer's Workshop. All Rights Reserved.

4. Game terms and details are from the TWILIGHT: 2000 Game, © 1984 Game Designer's Workshop, and are protected by U.S. trademark and copyright laws.

PLAYER REFERENCE SHEET

Needle, Part 3

Treasure Listing

The following items were found during the two prior trips to the jungle. Cash and salable items were sold and divided. Other items may be taken if desired. Players may divide them in any manner.

Cash or Salable Items

GP Value	Items
100	Various normal coins (from the body in the ruins)
5,000	Gold Bust of Torgel, 5″ tall (found in maze)
20	Golden bell, 3″ handle, 2″ tall cup (found in maze)
10,000	Golden throne with velvet trim (found in maze center)
6,000	King's reward
600	Gems from natives
250	Granite life-size human bust (found while lumbering)
500	125-pound elephant tusk (found while lumbering)
1,000	40-pound turquoise rock (found while lumbering)
1,000	150-pound block of quartz (found while lumbering)
5,000	Odd gem (found while lumbering)
2,400	Pirates' coins
15,000	1 pirate magic-user's spell book
30,000	Final reward from the king
76,870	total; minus 2,160 paid to Montana 1/7 of the first trip's haul; Digger was excluded) leaves 74,710, or about 12,451 gp per person (6-way split).

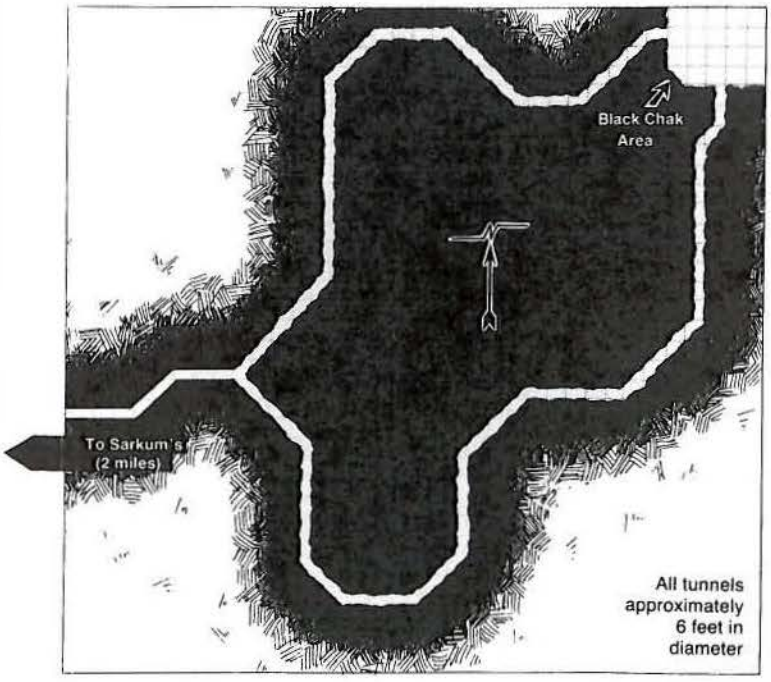
Curiosities

Objects made of a strange reddish metal:

a. 13 coins bearing strange runes, which say "Garhsa Koo" on one side, "One Sarkum" on the other
b. 4 similar coins but without runes, worn flat
c. 2-inch square piece of fabric made of woven metal strands
d. Spoon-fork utensil (spork)

Bones etc.:

a. 100 pounds of various old bones
b. Humanoid skeleton with four arms
c. Batrachian skeleton with two neat 1/2″ holes in the skull, one in front and one behind
d. Batrachian skull with neat 1/2″ holes, as above
e. 8′-long gorgosaurus skull (a carnivorous dinosaur)
f. Mummified shrunken humanoid head, intact



Other:

a. Humanoid made of tin, standing with axe
b. A rusty oil can
c. Small broken ceramic jug with the drawing of a spider on it
d. Three normal iron keys on a key ring
e. Old rotting wooden chest (found to be bottomless)
f. Four rusty axe heads, no handles
g. An odd amulet with a spider inscribed on each side, no chain

Magic Items

a. *Ioun Stone +1* (dusty rose color)
b. *Ring of Fire Resistance* (2 were found, but 1 was given to Montana)
c. Bracelet, a solid brass ring 3″ dia. (giant-sized *ring of warmth*)
d. *Bag of Holding* (found while lumbering; 500 lb. limit)
e. *Guisarme +3* (pole arm, found while lumbering)
f. Magical chalice, 5-inch cup atop a 3-inch tall base and stem — no discernable magical effect
g. Wand of Light, odd and flexible, made of an unknown substance. If struck against any hard object, it glows to 30' radius for 1 turn, then goes dark. It can be used as often as desired, and has no charges.
h. Golden *Bell of Blasting*, with a 3-inch-long handle and a 2-inch-tall cup; solid gold, with a golden clapper. When rung, a small gem-like object (apparent value 1,000 gp) falls from inside it, and will explode 3 rounds later in a 6d6 *fireball* unless the *bell* is placed over it. (This action merely delays the *fireball* until the *bell* is again picked up.) 5 charges remaining.
Value: 7,500 gp.
i. *Platter of Purity: Golden serving platter 1′ wide, 2′ long, with golden handles on each end. Any consumables placed on its surface will become purified in 3 rounds. Poisons are negated; unfortunately, potions are turned to pure water. No living thing can be affected, nor any non-consumable items.*
***Value:** 5,000 gp.*
j. Apple of Chaos, 5″ dia, gold. If thrown, its material form disappears where it lands, but its image remains (a phantasm), affecting all creatures within 40′ of it. All victims are affected as if by the 5th level illusionist spell *chaos*, suffering *confusion* (as the druid spell). Normal fighters (not paladins or rangers), illusionists, creatures with intelligence 4 or less, and monsters which do not use magic may each make a saving throw vs. spells to avoid the effect; no other creatures gain a saving throw. The confusion lasts for 20 rounds, until the phantasmal *apple* disappears. The image (and the effect) may be removed by a *dispel magic* spell, but checked against 20th level magic use.
Value: 3,000 gp.

Special (Party-Owned)

a. 400 sheets of reddish metal (300 from the ruins and 100 from the Native Tribal Mother), each 2′ by 5′, less than 1/32″ thick. The metal cannot be damaged except by magic. Each sheet weighs 100 coin (10 pounds).
Value: 100 gp per sheet, or 1,000 gp per sheet if the cutter (below) is thrown in free.
b. Cutter: An odd device, about 8 inches long; most of it is handle, with a roller on one side of the end and a short knife edge on the same end, opposite the roller. If two sheets of the strange metal are placed with a slight overlap, and if the overlap is then rolled with this device, the metal will fuse together, forming a single unbroken sheet — no crack or edge will remain. The knife edge will cut the metal easily, without any force needed.
Note: Montana gets a 1/7 share of the value of 300 sheets.

Classifieds

Northeast Region

Connecticut: Two gamers in the Shelton-Stratford area are seeking other players of the AD&D® Game and various other RPGs. If you are interested and at least 18 years of age, contact: Karen Betts, 39 Hunters Ridge, Shelton, CT 06484. Phone: (203) 929-3736 (weekdays after 6:00 PM).

New Jersey: We are starting a club in the Sussex county area. Members are needed! Club activities will include the AD&D®, STAR FRONTIERS®, and TOP SECRET® games, as well as other RPGs. Campaigns are B.Y.O.C. (Bring Your Own Characters). Contact: S. Weber, H.C.R. 60 Box 61, Glenwood, NJ 07418. Phone: (201) 764-3409 (between 5:30 PM and 9:00 PM).

New York: Small Brooklyn-based party of semi-fearless adventurers is looking for players to brave the AD&D® Game world. Ages 15-23 preferred. Contact: Joe Gargiulo, 1634 80th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11214. Phone: (718) 837-3110.

New York: We are looking for experienced AD&D® and TOP SECRET® Game players in and around the Middle Village/Elmhurst area of Queens. Contact: Doug Benel, 75-08 Juniper Blvd. South, Middle Village, New York 11379.

Pennsylvania: I'd like to join a club that plays the AD&D® Game in the Philadelphia area. Contact: Richard Walters, 4114 Fairdale R.D., Philadelphia, PA 19154. Phone: (215) 637-7124.

Pennsylvania: We need players and DMs who are willing to join a campaign. If you're interested, contact: Mark Cappiello, 43 East Phila Avenue, Morrisville, PA 19067.

North Central Region

Illinois: We need AD&D® Game players for a new campaign. Experienced players are preferred, but beginners are welcome. Must be at least 16 years of age. Contact Richard Reinhold, 5130 N. Western Avenue, Chicago, IL 60625. Phone: (312) 769-3098.

Illinois: *The Dungeons Guild* is looking for a few good adventurers. If you live in Illinois (Cook or Will counties), contact: Eric Smith, 3113 Euclid Drive, South Chicago Heights, IL 60411. Phone: (312) 755-2036.

Ohio: We are forming an RPGA™ Network club, and we need players and DMs for the AD&D® Game. Contact: John Eikenberry, 317 West 4th Street, Greenville, OH 45331.

Ohio: Will all members of *The Chaotic Union* (registered RPGA™ Network club) please contact the club president as soon as possible. We have forgotten who you are! (The next issue of "Entropy", the newsletter published at random intervals, will be out sometime between now and next Christmas.) Contact: John Goering, 4215 Dawnshire Drive, Parma, OH 44134.

Ohio: A 20-year old DM would like to join or start up a gaming group. Interested players please contact: John Davidson, 2740 Westerville Road, Apt. C, Columbus, OH 43224.

Wisconsin: The RPGA™ Network needs you! HQ is in desperate need of volunteers willing to donate a few hours in the daytime or on weekends to much-needed organizational work, including tournament scoring, typing, filing, data entry, playtesting, telephone answering, and general paper-shuffling. If you're interested, contact Penny Petticord at (414) 248-3625 between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM Central time.

Southwest Region

California: Mature 15-year-old would like a pen pal, and would like to join a weekly or biweekly AD&D® Game campaign in Santa Maria or the surrounding area. If you can help, contact: Carin Bigrigg, 984 Terrace Avenue, Santa Maria, CA 93455. Phone: (805) 937-4235.

California: Expert DM is seeking players of the AD&D® Game for a new campaign. All books (including *Unearthed Arcana*) will be used. If you're interested, please contact: Lenard Lakofka, 2151 Pacific Avenue, Apt. B 203, Costa Mesa, CA 92627. Phone: (714) 548-4930.

California: Attention all gamers! I'm trying to form a registered RPGA™ Network club in the Huntington Beach area. AD&D® Game players are needed. No experience is necessary, and any age is welcome. Contact Hank Wyckoff at (714) 960-8266 for further information.

California: Bay area members are needed for a new club, *The Knights of the Black Phoenix*. We play the MORROW PROJECT, RUNEQUEST®, GOLDEN HEROES, and CHILL™ Games, and many other RPGs. If you're interested, call James at (415) 234-5857. 'Til then:

Forever the Black Phoenix

South Central Region

Missouri: Help! Lonely AD&D® Game player seeks others in the Springfield area. Ages 12-16 preferred. Contact: Drew Thompson, 1725 North Weller, Springfield, MO 65803.

Southeast Region

Florida: I would like to join a local club that plays the AD&D® Game. Contact: Nicholas Rowland, 4736 North Bay Road, Miami Beach, FL 33140.

Louisiana: We, *The Game Masters*, are starting a club for all games and ages! If you are willing to join, contact Doug at (318) 981-1311.

Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico: Attention all role-players in the San Juan area! I would like to form a gaming club. I play the D&D® Game (all levels), and the AD&D®, TOP SECRET®, GAMMA WORLD®, GANGBUSTERS™, INDIANA JONES™, and CAR WARS™ games. Other games are welcome. Please contact: Cesar Diaz, 190 Hostos B543, Hato Rey, P.R. 00918. Phone: (809) 751-7324.

Foreign

Canada: I would like to hear from some Montrealers who are interested in starting a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game (or ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game) campaign. Contact: Didi Allen, 4840 Bonavista Road, #206, Montreal, P.Q. Canada H3W 2C8.

Canada: The *University of Toronto Role Playing Gamers* club is eager for more membership. Contact: Pierre Savoie at (416) 690-6985 (evenings only).

Special

Far Flung Gamers Meetings

Due to circumstances beyond our control, there will be meetings of the *Far Flung Gamers* at both Sun Coast Skirmishes and Contact '85 game conventions. The guest lecture at Contact '85 will be presented by Jim Minz on the topic "Sex and the AD&D® Game, the Untold Story." At Sun Coast Skirmishes, Dr. Floyd R. Turbo will once again take the podium with a rousing talk on "Mutant Cockroaches — Nature's Way of Getting Even." The documentary film, "I was a GAMMA WORLD® Game Bag Lady," will also be shown.

Lost: One armadillo, approximately 2' long, wearing a tweed sports jacket, Dingo boots, and mirrored sunglasses. Goes by the name of Arnie. Last seen swilling brewskies and harassing barmaids in the MECCA cocktail lounge. If seen, please contact the nearest *Far Flung Gamer*.

I would like to set up a network of gaming clubs all over the nation with a system for trading games, running conventions, and other activities. If you're interested, contact: Robert O'Neal, 2149 North Natchez, Chicago, IL 60635.

Attention all RPGA™ Network Members!

Anyone wishing to join an RPGA™ Network correspondence club, please contact: William E. Roland, P.O. Box 15632, College Station, TX 77840.

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Convention Announcements

Arkansas

STAGE 9 WINTER FANTASY

The University of Arkansas, Little Rock, hosts this gaming extravaganza on December 20, 21 & 22, 1985. The convention will feature RPGA™ Network tournaments (AD&D®, TOP SECRET®, and MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ games) plus a video room, boardgames, an auction, and much more. RPGA™ member discount on admission.

For further information on attending or judging, contact Sonny Scott, Route 3, Box 238, Little Rock, AR 72211. Phone: (501) 821-2088.

Indiana

CONTACT '85

Come to Evansville, Indiana, on the weekend of November 15, 16 & 17, 1985 for this annual science-fiction and gaming convention. This year we will once again feature RPGA™ Network tournaments (AD&D®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™, and TOP SECRET® games), and many other gaming events. Special guests will be Jack L. Chalker and the Network's own Penny Petticord.

For further information on attending or judging, contact: R.C.S.F.A., P.O. Box 3894, Evansville, IN 47737. Phone: (812) 858-5419.

PENTACON

Come to the Grand Wayne Center in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on November 30, 1985 for Fort Wayne's first gaming convention! Hours are 9:00 A.M. until midnight. The convention features an RPGA™ Network Tournament (AD&D® game), CALL OF CTHUHLU® and TRAVELLER® games, many other role-playing, boardgame, and miniatures events, plus a painting contest and a masquerade ball.

For further information, contact: Pentacon, P.O. Box 9707, Fort Wayne, IN 46899.
For judging information, contact: Michael Durant, 1201 Swinney, Fort Wayne, IN 46804. Phone: (219) 422-9964.

North Carolina

Waldenbooks 898 is holding a series of mini-tournaments at Cross Creek Mall in Fayetteville. RPGA™ Network tournaments are featured.

For further information on attending or judging, contact: Geoff Holbrook, 438 Cross Creek Mall, Fayetteville, NC 28303. Phone: (919) 864-5186.

Wisconsin

WINTER FANTASY™ Convention

Come to Lake Geneva on January 4 & 5, 1986, for your gaming pleasure! WINTER FANTASY Convention '86 will be held at the Americana Resort, and will feature RPGA™ Network tournaments (AD&D® and GAMMA WORLD games), AXIS & ALLIES™, RAIL BARON™, and RISK™ game tournaments, plus 30mm Napoleonics, 15mm Zulu War, and 25mm Circus Maximus. Many other role-playing events, miniatures, boardgames, and demonstrations will be available, plus a dealer area and an auction. Special guests will include Jim Ward, Tom Wham, Frank Mentzer, Carl Smith, and Penny Petticord. Admission Fee: $4.00 per day or $7.00 for the weekend. All games are free!

For more information, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: WINTER FANTASY Convention, P.O. Box 721, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

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GEN CON® 18 Game Fair Tournament Winners

AD&D® Game Feature Tournament ("Convert")

1st place	2nd Place	3rd Place
David Alford	Mike Cormack	Jozef Brewer
Jeff Ellis	Daniel Dwyer	Steve Breman
Dennis Everett	Steve Glimpse	James Crompton
Timothy Fischer	Les Hahn	Alice Felden
Steve Hardinger	Peter Lazzari	David Johnston
Brandon Jaeger	Raymond Maddox	Mary Konczyk
Carl Johnson	Wes Meador	Peter Letenauchyn
Scott Johnson	Tim Pool	Julia Martin
Kent Martin	Rich Rydberg	Kevin McFarlin
Mark Minz	Doug Saul	Skip Olsen
Kirk Reed	Bruce Schabinger	Rocky Pisto
James Terry	Mark Slacin	Anthony Ragan
Steve Thearle	Royce Smith	Michael Schneider
Blake Woodside	David Spachek	James Robertson
Mary Zalapi	Craig Stevens	John Terry

AD&D Game Masters Tournament ("Spring Fever")

Bob Argent	Don Bingle	Rich Bingle
Kelley Foote	Linda Bingle	Ed Peterson
Randall Lemon	Bob Hart	Phil Rowell
Jeff Martin	Frank Vetrovec	Randy Solo
John A.T. Vaccaro	Jim Wade	Russ Werner

D&D® Game Tournament ("Where Chaos Reigns")

Brian Leikam	Alan Broset	Reynold Baumstark
Skip Olsen	Frank Vetrovec	Kelley Foote
Linda Rastle	Jim Vickers	Raymond Seymour

STAR FRONTIERS® Game Tournament ("Rings of Titan")

Kelley Foote	Travis Harrington	John W.L. Kentner
Kenneth Ritchart	Russell Werner	Jim Ortlieb

AD&D Game Special Tournament ("Temple of Elemental Evil")

Steve Breman	Bob Argent	Bryan Conry
John Carey	Erik Bauer	Erik Flom
Dean Edgell	Kelley Foote	Steve Hardinger
Chris Gandy	Steve Glimpse	Dale King
Carl Johnson	Jim Hanan	Jay Kotlizer
Kent Martin	John Harnes	Richard Kowicki
Rembert Parker	Randall Lemon	Michael McGonagle
William Piechota	Neil Maruca	Ed Peterson
Rich Rydberg	James Robertson	Rocky Pisto
Randy Solo	Bruce Sturgen	Frank Power
Russell Werner	Eric Szulczewski	John A.T. Vaccaro
Blake Woodside	Steve Thearle	Michael Vazquez

TOP SECRET® Game Tournament ("Operation: MELTdown")

Don Bingle	Linda Bingle	Justin Hoffman
Steve Glimpse	Richard Bingle	Chris Lisowski
Kent Martin	Frank Vetrovec	John Miller

MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Game Tournament ("Badoon Falcon")

Tom Alexander	Don Bingle	Charles Blackwell
Robert Cantermen	Richard Comber	Bruce Boughner
Scott Costello	Timothy Fischer	Carter Fink
Kelley Foote	Jon Jaeger	Chris Hadjison
Vincent Fruge	Carl Judisch	Jason Masters
Chris Gandy	Tracy Landrum	Marc Mohan
Steven Huey	Marc McClennan	Brett Noe
David Johnston	Scott Needham	John Pantano
Lawrence Lerner	Brad O'Neill	Jeff Stoeler
Jeffrey Malinowski	Kevin Rowe	Norbert Taylor
Chris Meador	Richard Sample	Michael Wagner
		James Treu